THE STATESMEN SERIES

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STATESMEN SERIES

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HENRY GRATTAN.

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STATESMEN SERIES.

LIFE OF
HENRY GRATTAN.

BY

ROBERT DUNLOP,

FELLOW OF OWENS COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE main source of information for Grattan's life is the biography by his son, Henry Grattan, in five vols. (1839-46). Though ill-digested and extremely intemperate, it is, nevertheless, a work of considerable merit. To it must of necessity be added the *Speeches* of Grattan and his *Miscellaneous Works*, likewise edited by his son. In regard to Grattan's earlier speeches, which have hitherto been deplored as lost, I take this opportunity to modify the statement on page 21 to that effect. The investigations of the Historical Commissioners have revealed the existence of a number of MS. volumes of Irish Parliamentary debates, ranging from 1776 to 1789, the value of which may be estimated from the fact that the printed debates only begin with the year 1782, and I am sanguine that when these volumes are published, as assuredly they ought to be, many of the "lost" masterpieces of Irish oratory, including those of Grattan, will be restored to us. Of the numerous biographical sketches, published at one time or another, it is only necessary to mention an able but

adverse criticism in the *Dublin University Magazine* for 1839, and the well-known and sympathetic essay by Mr. Lecky in his *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland.* For the general history of the times, I may refer, in the first place, to Mr. Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century,* a work of the highest excellence, but, unfortunately, as yet incomplete. Though venturing to differ from him on several points, notably in regard to Grattan's conduct on the Reform Bill of 1783, I have only done so with great fear and trembling. From 1793, where Mr. Lecky's last published volume breaks off, down to the Union, I have always had before me Plowden's *Historical Review,* the *Irish Parliamentary Debates,* and a little-known but excellent *History of Ireland* by the Rev. Samuel Burdy. To these may be added, with reference to the Commercial Propositions and the question of the Regency, Earl Stanhope's *Life of Pitt;* Earl Russell's *Life of C. J. Fox,* and the *Correspondence of the Right Hon. John Beresford.* For the rise and progress of the United Irish movement, MacNeven's *Pieces of Irish History;* Wolfe Tone's *Works* and *Autobiography;* the *Reports of the Parliamentary Committees;* and R. R. Madden's *United Irishmen,* have been chiefly relied on. On the crisis in 1795, Earl Fitzwilliam's two *Letters to the Earl of Carlisle* have not been overlooked. For the general state of Ireland, and particularly of the army, on the eve of the Rebellion, Lord Dunfermline's *Memoirs of Sir Ralph Abercromby* may be consulted with considerable advantage. For the Union, all the State papers of importance will be found

in the *Correspondence of Lord Auckland;* the *Correspondence of Lord Cornwallis,* and the *Correspondence of Lord Castlereagh.* Sir Jonah Barrington's *Historic Memoirs* is a work of interest, but of little merit. In regard to the Catholic Emancipation agitation, so far as it concerned Grattan, the chief additional sources of information are Wyse's *Historical Sketch of the Catholic Association;* Charles Butler's *Historical Memoirs respecting the Catholics;* the Grenville *Memoirs;* Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party;* the *Diaries and Correspondence* of the Right Hon. George Rose and Lord Colchester; O'Connell's *Correspondence,* edited by Mr. Fitzpatrick; John O'Connell's and William Fagan's lives of O'Connell; and, I may also be permitted to add, Mr. Hamilton's monograph on the same subject in the present series. Much that is personally interesting respecting Grattan will be found in the *Hibernian Magazine* (1782), the *Memoirs* of Francis Horner, Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Francis Doyle, and in the *Recollections* of Lord Cloncurry and Samuel Rogers. Lord Brougham's *Essay* is well known; but the best criticism of Grattan's position as an orator will be found in the *Edinburgh Review,* vol. 36. In conclusion, I feel that some apology is due for the frequent quotations from State documents that disfigure certain chapters of this book, and I can only hope that my anxiety to present an impartial account of this most perplexing and fiercely disputed period may in some measure furnish an excuse for that defect.

R. D.

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RIGHT HON. HENRY GRATTAN, M.P.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND STRUGGLE FOR FREE TRADE.

1746-1780.

Birth, parentage, and education—State of Irish political parties—Life in the Temple and at Sunning Hill—Habits, tastes, and disposition—Interest in Irish politics—Government of Lord Townshend—Contributions to *Baratariana*—Called to the Bar—Enters Parliament—Administration of Lord Harcourt—Maiden speech—Outbreak of the American War—Effect on Irish politics—National bankruptcy and universal distress—Speech on the expenses of Government—Non-importation agreements—Rise of the Volunteers—Moves an amendment to the Address—Great victory—Lord North's commercial propositions—Irish feeling on the subject.

HENRY GRATTAN, the son of James and Mary Grattan, was born at his father's residence of Belcamp, in Dublin, on July 3rd, 1746. James Grattan was a barrister of respectability, sometime Recorder of the city, and from 1761 to 1766 one of its representatives in Parliament. Professedly a Whig, he was at heart a Tory of Tories. Devotedly attached to the English interests in Ireland and a strenuous opponent of every effort on the part of the "patriots" to reassert the independence of the Irish Parliament, he was nevertheless a man of sterling integrity, and sound if somewhat narrow principles.

To no one was he more bitterly opposed than to his colleague in the representation of Dublin, Dr. Lucas. Many and acrimonious were the disputes between the two, seldom ending, it must be admitted, in victory for the Recorder, whose irritableness and inability to express himself with fluency often placed him completely at the mercy of his more popular opponent. On one occasion Lucas had ironically alluded to him as "he who is so *sure* of being returned for the city—he who has the voice of the people of Dublin with him." Nettled by this reference to his unpopularity, the Recorder lost his temper and called Lucas to order. Whereupon the latter calmly replied: "If I am out of order, I will unsay all I have said. I will say the Recorder of the City of Dublin, who is so certain of *not* being returned at the next election—he who has the voice of the people directly against him." The retort was greeted with loud laughter, and the poor Recorder was obliged to consume his wrath in silence. But to a man of his anxious and excitable temperament these public defeats were most galling, and while they embittered and perhaps shortened his life, only rendered him more dogmatic and more determined to have his own way in private.

Through his mother, a lady of great personal attractions, the daughter of Thomas Marlay, Chief Justice of Ireland, a friend of Lord Chesterfield and a man of ability and integrity, Henry Grattan was descended from a family of ancient lineage—the De Merlys of Normandy, who appear to have settled in Ireland about the time of the Restoration. Whether it was through her also, as is gravely asserted, that he inherited his talents, is a matter of no very great importance; but it is interesting to note here that it was to her brothers, Colonel Thomas Marlay, of Celbridge Abbey, and

Richard Marlay, the celebrated *Jeoffry Wagstaffe*, afterwards Bishop of Waterford, that Grattan turned for advice in his younger days, and for sympathy and encouragement in the most critical moments of his political career. In due time Grattan was sent to school; but unfortunately that of Mr. Ball, to which he went, in Great Ship Street —a quarter much frequented by lawyers—does not appear to have been particularly remarkable either for the soundness or liberality of its training. Mr. Ball, from his pupil's account at any rate, was evidently a narrow-minded pedant, very apt to veil his ignorance under a liberal application of the rod. A dispute over a certain passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, terminating in a severe and, according to Grattan, undeserved reprimand for idleness, soon led to their separation and his removal to Mr. Young's school, in Abbey Street, where the Malones and Hussey Burgh had received their education. Beyond these meagre facts we know absolutely nothing of his school-boy days, though if we may trust the anecdote of how his father once discovered him at midnight in a neighbouring churchyard sitting alone on a tombstone, trying by practical experience to rid himself of his terror of ghosts, he had already at a very early age given unmistakable evidence of that moral courage and contempt for "bogies" of all sorts which so honourably distinguished his political conduct, and which is one of the most pleasing traits in his character.

Never of a robust constitution, he was in the summer of 1763 attacked by a severe illness, from the effects of which he continued to suffer considerably through life. On his recovery he entered Trinity College as a Fellow-commoner. "Old Trinity" was a wild enough place in those days. All the young

bloods of Ireland were congregated there. They drank, swore, fought duels with one another, had regular pitched battles in the streets with the Ormond-quay butchers, nailed the ears of adventuresome bailiffs to the pump, and were guilty of a thousand other extravagancies and follies. Nevertheless the College had its good side as well as its bad. The quality of its teaching was very high; higher indeed, according to Lord Chesterfield, than that of the English universities.

"The examinations in the University of Dublin," says a quaint contemporary, "are not matters of form; to answer at them requires infinite labour and study; they are performed openly in the face of the world, and their points are the principles of government, sciences, and the *belles lettres*. The necessary study for a fellowship in this University is so severe, that there are many instances of gentlemen dying in consequence of intense application."

Such, however, we are informed, was Grattan's ability, that he not only passed his examinations with success, but at each of them carried off one of the high prizes of the University.

Despite a certain rather painful reminiscence connected with Ovid, his favourite study was the classics. His love for them, which he had the happiness to cherish through life, was unequivocal. Of modern languages his knowledge was very slender, though in the retirement of his later years he amused himself by translating some of Miss Edgeworth's charming stories of Irish life into French. For poetry he had a great liking, especially for that of Pope, whose epigrammatic brilliancy and limpid music possessed a great charm for him, as it did for his contemporaries in general.

Every lad at school or college has his "chum," in whose fidelity and discretion he has implicit confidence, and into whose sympathetic ear he pours his grievances,

his doubts, and his aspirations. Curiously enough, however, Grattan's *fidus Achates* was not a member of the University, and the circumstances of their first acquaintance are altogether unknown. Indeed, young Broome is to us little better than a lay figure, in whose company Grattan took delightful summer rambles through Wicklow, discoursing the while on nature and poetry, and settling with the airy confidence congenial to youth all those problems of human life which have perplexed mankind since the advent of Mother Eve, inclining on the whole to a somewhat pessimistic and materialistic view of things, but nevertheless managing to enjoy themselves fairly well withal.

To Broome Grattan addressed his letters, compositions painfully affecting the style set by Pope, with all Pope's artificiality, but without any of his sparkling wit. Of Broome himself we only know that he was in rather embarrassed circumstances, and that he owed a commission, which he subsequently obtained in the army, to the liberality of Grattan. He seems, however, to have been a sympathetic and grateful companion, fully impressed but not overawed by his friend's abilities—just the sort of man in fact to whom Grattan could unreservedly reveal himself, even to those poetic exercises (fortunately for the reader long since consigned to the limbo of waste paper) in which he occasionally indulged, without fear of being ridiculed or unduly elated. His military knowledge afterwards proved of considerable assistance to Grattan and Charlemont when they were engaged in organizing the Volunteers. He survived his friend, but had the satisfaction of knowing that length of years had only served to mellow and not to weaken that friendship.

It is necessary at this point, in view of a great crisis which now occurred in Grattan's life, to refer briefly to

the general state of politics in Ireland. In 1747, just a year after Grattan was born, Swift—to whose patriotic writings, his *Drapier's Letters* in particular, was due the creation of a healthy national sentiment amongst the upper classes—died. After his death the work of agitation devolved upon Dr. Lucas. Lucas, a man of little education but of powerful intellect, unbounded self-confidence, and indefatigable perseverance, was by profession originally an apothecary; but having, by the detection and exposure of certain encroachments by the "court party" upon the charters of the City of Dublin and other corporate towns, attracted considerable attention to himself, he thenceforward devoted himself wholly to politics. In 1749 he managed to make himself so obnoxious by his writings to the Government that he was proclaimed a traitor, and obliged to seek safety by a voluntary exile in England. A *nolle prosequi*, however, some years afterwards enabled him to return to Ireland, when he was elected, along with Recorder Grattan, to represent the City of Dublin in Parliament. Meanwhile that assembly, once satirized by Swift as the Legion Club,

> "Not a bowshot from the College,
> Half the globe from sense and knowledge,"

had been doing something to redeem its character from the charge of ministerial obsequiousness. The advent of Henry Flood in 1759, as member for Kilkenny, followed by his brilliant speech against Primate Stone, had led not merely to the recognition of his own superior abilities as an orator, but what was of more importance, to the formation of a regular party of opposition, which speedily acquired that influence which springs from unity of purpose and from a clearly defined line of political action. The objects which Flood set before him were the shorten-

ing of the duration of Parliaments, the reduction of the pension list, the creation of a constitutional militia, and the establishment of those principles in regard to the independence of the Legislature which Molyneux had advocated, and for which impeachment would have in all likelihood been his punishment had not his death intervened. In all his endeavours Flood found in Lucas an able and indefatigable ally. But more important even than the services which he rendered to his party in the House of Commons was the influence which he exercised on the country at large through the columns of his *Citizens' Journal*, the precursor of the well-known *Freeman's Journal*. By these means public interest, which had long slumbered in regard to the transactions of Parliament, was awakened, and a generous enthusiasm for national independence kindled in the breasts of the rising generation.

Breathing the sceptical and comparatively free atmosphere of Trinity College, it was hardly possible that Grattan should have escaped the general contagion; but his open avowal of the obnoxious doctrines of Lucas greatly incensed his father, who carried his resentment so far as to disinherit him of that portion of his property which he had under his control. The lapse of time with its healing influences would doubtless have brought with it a reconciliation, but before that could take place his father died in June, 1766. Though the bulk of his patrimony had fortunately been secured to him by settlement, the quarrel with his father greatly distressed Grattan and cast a shade of gloom over him, which is plainly reflected in his correspondence with Broome. At one time he had intended to read for a fellowship; but this intention he now relinquished, and in Michaelmas Term, 1767, he went to London and entered himself as a

student of the Middle Temple. Life in the Temple was, I suppose, much the same in 1768 as it is in 1889. Time, we know, deals very gently with colleges, schools, and inns of court. The law, politics, literature, the turf, the river, and the tavern had each its votaries much in the same proportion as it has at present. Unfortunately regarding Grattan our information is deplorably scanty. For the law he had from the commencement, if not indeed a positive aversion, at any rate no very great liking. For poetry and literature in general, as already remarked, he had a cultivated taste, and like the majority of his countrymen he was an ardent admirer of the drama and a lover of good music. But it was to politics and the life of the senate-house that he felt himself most powerfully attracted. To listen to the debates in Parliament, a habit he had formed when a student at Trinity College, was to him one of the supremest pleasures in life.

In addition to their chambers in the Temple, he and Day, an old college friend who lived with him, and who afterwards rose to a high position in his profession, took rooms in a little cottage at Sunning Hill, on the borders of Windsor Forest. Grattan was in raptures with the scenery. "The country," he wrote to Broome, "is most beautiful. There is an antiquity and wildness in the woodlands here, infinitely surpassing what I have met with." Reminiscences of Pope, "the master of poetry," as he styles him, added still further to his enjoyment. The calmness and solitude of the place he found very congenial and more conducive to study than the din and bustle of London life. Here, after listening to a debate in the House, he would retire and spend whole moonlight nights wandering about under the trees—

"Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,"

soliloquising, until he awoke to the fact that he had lost himself. His frequent and animated discussions with a certain invisible person whom he addressed as "Mr. Speaker" greatly alarmed his good landlady, who began to have grave apprehensions as to the sanity of her lodger. His friend Day tells a good story of how in one of his midnight rambles he stopped before a gibbet, and commenced apostrophising the chains in his usual animated strain, when he suddenly felt a tap on his shoulder, and on turning about was accosted by an unknown person. "How the devil did you get down?" To which the rambler calmly replied, "Sir, I suppose you have an interest in that question!"

In truth the situation of the nation was well calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of a far less ardent politician than Grattan. The Earl of Chatham, whom the voice of the people had in 1766, despite the influence of George III., recalled to the helm of affairs, was old and bed-ridden with the gout. The ministry to which he had lent his name, without his controlling hand, rapidly drifted into schemes entirely opposed to his policy. The Townshend Acts and the assertion of the right of England to tax her colonies for imperial purposes, the return of Wilkes and his election for Middlesex, alarmed the country. For Chatham himself Grattan had the most intense admiration, and the sketch which he drew of him about this time, and which subsequently found its way into *Baratariana* (of which hereafter) as the suppositious production of Robertson the historian, shows how clearly he had grasped the salient features of that great statesman's character, his lonely and unapproachable grandeur, his originality, his haughtiness, his total abnegation of

self and indifference to the claims of family and society when England, to whom he had devoted himself, was in question. "His eloquence," he said, "was an era in the senate; peculiar and spontaneous, familiarly expressing gigantic sentiments and instinctive wisdom. Not like the torrent of Demosthenes, or the splendid conflagration of Tully, it resembled sometimes the thunder and sometimes the music of the spheres." Indeed there were many points of resemblance between Grattan's own style of oratory and that of Chatham, and he was often twitted with carrying his admiration to such a degree as to ape the mannerisms of the "Great Commoner." In the House of Commons the greatest orator he thought was Burke: "Boundless in knowledge, instantaneous in his apprehensions and abundant in his language, he speaks with profound attention and acknowledged superiority, notwithstanding the want of energy, the want of grace, and the want of elegance."

Soon after he had settled in London he experienced a heavy blow in the death of his favourite sister, Catherine, in the winter of 1767. This sad event and the news of his friend Broome's serious illness made him thoroughly wretched, and deepened the natural gloom of his disposition. On the reassembling of Parliament in May, 1768, he was greatly disappointed by a stringent enforcement of the order respecting the admission of strangers into Parliament. Deprived of his usual source of amusement he tried to console himself by reading the parliamentary debates: "Performances," he remarked, "that abound in natural reasoning and easy expression, but cannot pretend to precision or eloquence." English history too claimed some share of his attention, and he thought Hume the only author who deserved the title of historian. The theatre and the coffee-house—"the wanderer's last resort,"

as he pathetically calls it—soon ceased to afford him entertainment, and in sheer desperation he determined to devote himself to law. His resolution was warmly commended by his uncle, Dean Marlay. But, except that it perhaps eased his conscience at the time, nothing ever came of this good resolve. In November, 1768, his mother died quite unexpectedly while staying with her sister, Mrs. Levinge, at Calvertstown. She was a lady of a singularly sweet disposition, and her death was bitterly mourned by her son, towards whom she had always manifested the tenderest affection.

Though living in England, Grattan still continued to take a lively interest in Irish politics. In his letters to Broome he is constantly asking for information as to the state of parties in Ireland. On learning that the Octennial Bill had passed in February, 1768, he wrote: "I am glad that sink of prostitution, the Irish Parliament, is to be drained octennially. This will control it, if it cannot amend, and may improve what is in the last stage of putrefaction, and cannot change without being bettered." About Christmas, 1769, he paid a visit to Ireland. His intention was to remain there only for a short time. "I shall soon be in England," he wrote to Day on January 9th. "I am tired of Dublin, with all its hospitality and all its claret." Circumstances occurred, however, which induced him to postpone his return for a time.

The appointment of Lord Townshend as Viceroy in August, 1767, marks the inauguration of a new epoch in the history of viceregal government in Ireland. Hitherto, for a considerable period, the post of Lord Lieutenant had been pretty much a sinecure, the real duties of which had been performed by the Lords Justices, with the natural result that all the power and

influence which properly belonged to the Crown had gradually slipped out of the hands of the English Ministry into those of a little clique of Castle officials, who by absorbing to themselves every post of emolument in the country, and by their enormous influence in Parliament, had practically constituted themselves the Government. In order, therefore, to recover their authority in the island the British Ministry had determined to abandon the old system, and to render the residence of the Viceroy compulsory. Some little difficulty had at first been experienced in finding any English nobleman willing to take the office on those terms; but at last Lord Townshend had consented. His appointment was immediately followed, as was intended, by a resolute attack upon the "Undertakers," as the great borough proprietors were called from their power of controlling Parliament. Though veiled, the attack was at once detected and resented by the "Undertakers," who, in order to paralyse the action of Townshend, threw their influence upon the side of the Opposition. The result was, as Grattan described it in a letter to Day, that there had been no winter in which party had fluctuated more than it did in 1769. The Lord Lieutenant, a brave soldier and a man of genial if somewhat vulgar habits, but wholly unqualified for civil administration, was rather despised than hated by the Irish, until he aroused the indignation of the nation by allowing himself to be made the tool of Ministerial duplicity. Of recent years it had been customary for the heads of money bills to take their origin with the Privy Council. But this assumption of power had always been disputed by the Opposition, with whom it formed a capital grievance. Accordingly, when in this session a money bill was presented to Parliament, the Opposition, with the help of the

"Undertakers," succeeded in throwing it out on the ground that it had not taken its rise, as by the Constitution it ought to have done, in the House of Commons. In doing so they were wholly within their rights, and the Lord Lieutenant at the time manifested no resentment, especially as the Commons immediately passed a very liberal money bill of their own, and also consented to an augmentation of the army, which was one of Townshend's great objects. What, then, was the surprise and indignation of the nation when the Lord Lieutenant, adopting the course pursued by Lord Sidney in 1692, immediately afterwards prorogued Parliament, and ordered both Houses to enter on their journals his protest against their conduct in regard to the Privy Council Money Bill as a breach of the Constitution. A period of intense political excitement and agitation followed. The press, which had for some time been inclined to fall asleep, again began to teem with invective. The letters of Junius, then attracting universal attention, furnished a model and stimulated imitation. Among the many contributions in this style to the *Freeman's Journal* were several by Grattan. They were, shortly after the retirement of Lord Townshend, republished along with others by Henry Flood and Sir Hercules Langrishe in a little volume called *Barataríana*, the significance of which title is at once apparent when by Barataria we understand Ireland, and by Sancho Panza, Lord Townshend, with an epistle dedicatory to his lordship by Grattan. Though open to the charge of exaggeration, these papers on constitutional principles are after all, as Grattan claimed for them, not satire but history. Few of them, however, equal the following passage from the Dedication in dignity and severity:—

"The following papers will reach you, my Lord, in another country

They will contribute to amuse those leisure moments when you reflect on transactions that must once have agitated your bosom. They will recall those motley times of embarrassed indolence—of broken councils—of sordid society—when business waited while Denis jested and Cunningham advised. You will look back to the sea on which you were tossed, and feel it a joy to be on shore though naked and without a friend. In those moments of reflection and safety you will recollect that you have introduced into this country a long train of mischiefs;—that you have left a name, as little to be forgotten as it can be beloved;—that the men who opposed you were not your enemies, nor the men who supported you your friends;—that your largesses were rejected by the spirit of indignant poverty;—that your favours, when they were received, were written in the sandy memory of disgusted hirelings, but your injuries engraven on the marble of the Constitution. Softened and stung by these considerations, you will lament the time when you were called from the ranks to which you belong, and from the ludicrous singularity of your genius transplanted to a station where honours did not grow around you, and where, of all whom you have served, and of all whom you have injured, your adversaries are those alone of whom you cannot complain."

It was during this visit to Ireland that Grattan became for the first time acquainted with Flood, whose estate in the county of Kilkenny adjoined that of Grattan's brother-in-law, Gervase Parker Bushe, M.P. for the borough of Callan, and a gentleman of fortune and family. An invitation to accompany Bushe and Flood to Kilkenny was an opportunity not to be lost, though, as he complained to Broome, pleasure and study pointed to London. Of Flood, with whom he spent a week, he formed a very high opinion. He was, he declared, "the most easy and best tempered man in the world, as well as the most sensible." Nevertheless he was anxious to be back in London, and was greatly annoyed because a suit with a tenant compelled him to go to Cavan. Return, however, he eventually did about the beginning of April, in company with Bushe; found all his acquaintances already assembled and his chambers comfortable and cheerful,

inviting him to be domestic and studious. But his enthusiasm for study, which his absence from it had stimulated, soon evaporated. Dissatisfied with himself, he became gloomy and morose.

"My dear friend," he wrote to Broome, from Sunning Hill, "I write from the dullest solitude which even I ever experienced. You know my mind has ever had a hankering after misery; I have cultivated that defect with astonishing success, and have now refined my mind into the most aching sensibility imaginable. . . . . Believe me, I long for that future moment, in which you and I, in the romantic composure of some pensive retreat, may enjoy each other's society; where I may find a firm peace of mind to which I am now a stranger. . . . . I love the Muse still; I have a sense, though not a feeling of real happiness; I say to myself, there is no true felicity but that which we enjoy by a fine intelligence, contemplating itself and sympathising in conscious friendship."

The idea of the fine intelligence at Sunning Hill contemplating itself, is irresistibly comical; but though there is a great deal of affectation and exaggeration in Grattan's complaint, it must be admitted that the state of mind into which he had worked himself was far from healthy. Fortunately, before it had time to grow into a settled habit, a complete change of life enabled him to throw it off and to escape from the fetters of a profession which he detested.

After a short visit to France in the autumn of 1771, in the company of Sir John Tydd, he was in Hilary Term, 1772, called to the Irish bar. The prospect afforded him no satisfaction.

"I am now," he wrote to Broome, "called to the Bar, without knowledge or ambition in my profession. The Four Courts are of all places the most disagreeable. My purpose is undetermined—my passion is retreat. I am resolved to gratify it at any expense. There is certainly repose, and may be an elegance, in insignificance."

Constrained, however, by the necessity of his position,

he determined to apply himself seriously to the study of the law. He went on circuit, and losing his first case returned his client half his fee. But the more he became acquainted with the practical working of the law the more he became disgusted with it. The drudgery of flattering the bench and the disgrace of "feeding" the attorneys were equally distasteful to him. His manner also was eccentric, his views desultory, and his previously acquired habits of thinking and acting were not such as went to the making of a great and successful lawyer. Politics, on the other hand, possessed an irresistible attraction for him. Most of his friends were either already in Parliament, or were keenly interested in the course of political affairs. Immediately on his return to Ireland he made a point of regularly attending the debates in the House of Commons. The retirement of the unpopular Townshend, and the arrival of his successor the Earl of Harcourt in the autumn, naturally increased the interest of the situation. Grattan seized the opportunity to offer to the new Lord Lieutenant a word of warning and advice.

"My Lord," he wrote, "the state of this country and the ill advice, as representative of the King, you are sure to be exposed to, justify an early address on the part of the public. More sincere than the accents with which the Parliament, the city, and the poet receive you, it shall not be less decent, less full of ardent hopes, of favourable impressions. We salute you with that credulous cordiality, that open hospitality, and all those lively expectations peculiar to a generous and a sanguine people. At the departure of the late Viceroy we feel an alacrity, the effect of relief; and inferring from the physical to the political climate, after such tempests, we hope that better days will succeed. . . . . My Lord, you are to reside among us; and if you are not to share our prosperity or distresses, you will however enjoy; by public observations on your conduct, the full fame of your administration. An evanescent harpy of the Crown will have no scruples; but the gentleman, who means to live in the midst of his tenantry, no doubt will be a gracious landlord. A resident Chief Governor labours under a difficulty

unknown to some Viceroys, and little considered by the last. He is apt to become too jocular a fellow, and to forget the dignity of his office in the levity of his person; the delegated Crown is too great a weight to be long sustained by every subject. We have seen the paltry actor sink into himself before the royal mantle was laid aside and the tragedy of his government concluded."

No picture of the social life of Dublin, at the period upon which we are about to enter, would be satisfactory which did not have as its principal figure the accomplished and patriotic Earl of Charlemont. After a somewhat dissipated life, spent chiefly abroad in Italy and England, James Caulfeild, fourth Viscount and first Earl of Charlemont, a name still beloved and honoured in the north of Ireland, came at last to the conclusion that residence in his own country was the first of his political duties, "since without it all others," as he truly said, "are impracticable." Accordingly, about 1770, he began to build a house for himself in Rutland Square, and to reconstruct his residence at Marino.

"Formed," as Grattan described him, "to unite the aristocracy and the people; with the manners of a court and the principles of a patriot; with the flame of liberty and the love of order; unassailable by the approaches of power, of profit, or of titles, he annexed to the love of freedom a veneration for order, and cast on the crowd that followed him the gracious light of his own accomplishments, so that the very rabble grew civilized as it approached his person."

At this time, in the very flower of his manhood and with qualities which did as much honour to his heart as to his head, his house soon became the centre of the most polite and intellectual society in Dublin. The "Society of Granby Row," as it was called, was, though not exclusively so, in the main a political club, and it was to his connexion with it and the acquaintance which he here formed with the Earl of Charlemont that Grattan sub-

sequently owed his introduction into Parliament. But the "Society of Granby Row" had other interests besides that of politics. The passion for private theatricals was then at its height. Everybody that could afford it, from the Lord Lieutenant downwards, indulged in this amusement—so congenial to the Irish temperament. In 1761, the *Beggar's Opera* was acted at Carton, the seat of the Duke of Leinster; the prologue being spoken by Dean Marlay, and parts taken by Lord Charlemont, Viscount Powerscourt, Mr. Conolly, Lady Louisa Conolly, and the Countess of Kildare. In 1774 similar dramatic performances were given at the country residences of Sir Hercules Langrishe, Flood and Bushe in Kilkenny; Flood, on one occasion, acting Macbeth and Grattan Macduff. At Marlay, the seat of Mr. La Touche, in the county of Dublin, Milton's *Mask of Comus* was acted, when an epilogue written for the occasion by Grattan, graceful in expression and by no means deficient in wit, was spoken by the beautiful and accomplished Miss La Touche, afterwards Countess of Lanesborough. In such pastimes as these did Grattan endeavour to relieve the monotony and drudgery of the law. "I find myself tolerably well," he wrote to Broome early in 1775, "though afflicted now and then by rheumatics and always by idleness. I shall hold some years longer with an utter distaste to the world." An event, however, just now occurred which altered the whole complexion of life for him. Shortly before the reassembling of Parliament in the autumn, Major Caulfeild, the brother of the Earl of Charlemont, was drowned at sea between Parkgate and Dublin. By the favour of the Earl and by the advice of Flood, Grattan was elected as his successor, and on December 11th, 1775, he took his seat in the House of Commons as Member for the Borough of Charlemont.

Something has already been said regarding the Government of Lord Townshend. The great object of his policy had been the substitution of Government influence in Parliament for that of the large borough proprietors. In this he had been, on the whole, successful. Money and honours were lavished on all who supported him. A majority in Parliament was purchased by corruption and maintained by corruption. "The gentlemen of the House of Commons," remarked a philosophic observer, "were taught to look up to the Viceroy, not only as the source, but as the dispenser of every gratification." The indignation of the Opposition at his unblushing political profligacy passed all bounds. Every question was contested, and the debates, often extending many hours beyond midnight, grew more acrimonious as they grew longer. His recall, therefore, in September, 1772, very naturally created a lull in Irish politics. His successor, Lord Harcourt, was an elderly nobleman of immense fortune, distinguished more for those *leniores animæ virtutes* which dignify and adorn private life, than for his political abilities. "Lord Harcourt," wrote Grattan to Broome, "is proper and decent and old and polite; and having done nothing has done no mischief: he is very much the reverse of poor Sancho." A short experience, however, soon dispelled the pleasing anticipations with which his Government had been hailed, and proved it to be not less extravagant and corrupt than that of his predecessor. A solemn promise of retrenchment was followed by an increase of £9,000 in the civil list, of £22,000 in the military, of £24,000 in the revenue, besides new pensions to the amount of £24,000, and that at a time when Ireland was rapidly approaching bankruptcy, and when the debt of the nation amounted to £994,890. Nevertheless, all this was not at first apparent. On the con-

trary, the pledges of the Government seemed to promise the blessings of an economical *régime.*

Under the circumstances, therefore, it was not surprising, however much it might afterwards be regretted, that Flood, who had hitherto occupied the position of Leader of the Opposition, should in October, 1775, have accepted office in the new Administration. In taking this step the purity and disinterestedness of his motives are, in my opinion, as unmistakeable as are the evil consequences that followed from it. It was his belief that as a Minister he would be able more effectually to serve the best interests of the country than by remaining in opposition at a time when opposition might appear factious. Unfortunately, as the event proved, he only succeeded in crippling himself, in alienating his friends, and in forfeiting his popularity with the people. Two months after Flood joined the Administration, Grattan took his seat in the House as Member for Charlemont. His maiden speech on 15th December was on a petition for compensation for the loss of official fees, into the merits of which it is not necessary to enter. With the natural eloquence that always attended his unpremeditated efforts Grattan opposed the petition. His speech made a great impression both outside and inside the House, and thus almost at a single bound did the young orator leap into the place left vacant by Flood. To himself his success must have been most gratifying. Here at last, after all his doubts and discontents and failures, he had found a sphere of action which was congenial to him. Though the solitude of nature always continued to possess an ineffable charm for him, that almost cynical indifference to life, so apparent in his letters to Broome, soon disappeared under the healthy stimulation of action, and gave place to a spirit of genial tolerance and evenness of

mind. It is much to be regretted that many of his earlier speeches, including some which he regarded as his best efforts; have been lost. Nothing, for example, remains of those on the Irish embargo in 1776; on the employment of 4,000 Irish troops in America; on the repeal of Poynings' law; the Irish Tenantry Bill; and the Free Trade question in 1779.

It is now necessary briefly to advert to the state of affairs in America, whither all eyes in Ireland were at this moment turned in eager expectation. The similarity of their situation had not escaped the notice of either nation, and had already in May, 1775, elicited from Congress a special address to the Irish urging the identity of their interests. The right of self-taxation, openly impugned by the British Minister in both countries, was as dear to the Irish as it was to the Americans, who were prepared to risk everything rather than surrender it. What if the Irish were to follow the example of the Americans? In Ireland popular opinion, especially among the hard-headed Presbyterians of the north, was wholly on the side of America. The rebellious talk that was reported to him scandalised and frightened the Lord Lieutenant, who trembled to think what might happen if Parliament declined to countenance the war, to which England was committed by overwhelming majorities. Already the first blood had been shed on both sides when the Irish Parliament met on 10th October, 1775. In his speech from the throne Harcourt directed the attention of Parliament to the disturbances in America, and called upon it to support the King in the maintenance of his legal authority there. An address was accordingly framed, pledging the Irish to assist the King in the suppression of the rebellion; but it was not carried without great opposition. And an amendment, urging

the necessity of "conciliatory and healing measures for the removal of the discontent which prevails in the colonies," was only defeated by a majority of forty; and thus Ireland found herself committed to a war utterly abhorrent to the general sentiment of the nation and most detrimental to her commercial interests.

Indeed in no part of the Empire were the disastrous effects of the war more keenly felt than they were in Ireland. Excluded from America—her chief market for linens (the only industry she had worth considering), and forbidden by a proclamation of Government from exporting her farm produce, lest, being captured at sea, it should afford subsistence to the enemy, Ireland rapidly approached a state of national insolvency. The distress was universal. The price of black cattle and of wool, rents, credit, private business, and public revenue, in all their branches rapidly sank; and thousands of manufacturers lived on charity or abandoned the country. Population declined, and in Dublin crowds of half-starving mechanics paraded the streets carrying a black fleece before them in token of their distress. The pressure was so severe that, in 1778, Ireland was obliged to borrow from England £50,000, for the payment of her troops, and the value of the imports from England was £634,444 below the average of the four preceding years.

It was under these distressing circumstances that Lord Harcourt's successor, Lord Buckingham, met Parliament in October, 1777. The Speech from the Throne manifested no intention on the part of Government to attempt to alleviate, by any remedial measures, the distress of the nation, and a motion by Grattan for a retrenchment in the expenses of Government, when he took the opportunity to condemn the American policy of Lord North, was rejected by a large majority. Amongst his auditors on

this occasion was C. J. Fox, who afterwards meeting him at Lord Moira's, complimented him highly upon his speech. The acquaintance thus formed afterwards ripened into a life-long friendship, which was not without its influence on the course of Irish history. On February 2nd, in the following year, the subject was reopened and a motion that "the expenses of the nation have exceeded its income" was ably supported by Grattan, in the first speech of which we possess an authentic report. "Ministers," he said, "had long ago admitted the necessity for retrenchment, but instead of retrenchment there had been a growing extravagance. It might be said that £9,000 in the course of two years was not much; but £9,000 in the two last years, superinduced on an increase in the two years before, more expensive than any former years, accompanied with an increase in every other establishment, was not only an insupportable burden, but a deadly proof of that active spirit of waste and extravagance, which had, under a succession of Governments, hurried the country on with accumulated velocity to general bankruptcy. The pension list alone—that national incumbrance, that public disgrace, in whose increase everything that should be respectable was blasted, the law, the faith, and the propriety of Government—that list, which had in one single day been increased £24,000, by the solemn and wasteful hand of one administration, and had preyed upon the vital strength and contributions of the people—the pension list alone, unaccompanied by the subsidiary list of sinecures, called loudly for retrenchment. The thing was too notorious to be doubted for a single instant. No man could deny it who recollected what regularly happened after the prorogation of Parliament and before the departure of an administration, when the day of promise was at hand and the Secretary's office opened to

hear the causes of those who had opposed economy, who had marred a great public question by a corrupt amendment and could advance the pretensions of some signal disgrace heaped upon themselves and their country. One job was the father of a thousand pretensions. The known prodigality of His Majesty's Ministers in Ireland had taught immodesty to the officer, and where everything was a job every man would be a claimant. The service of the Crown meanwhile had sunk and its dignity vanished. Ministers had taken the jewels out of the Crown and staked them against the liberties of the people. Between the average revenue and the annual expenses of Government there was a deficit of £273,700. Such a state of affairs explained itself and furnished a conclusive argument for retrenchment. But there were men ashamed to deny the necessity for reduction, who nevertheless affected to differ as to the way in which it should be carried out. They thought, forsooth, that reduction should come from the executive. To rest the fate of the country upon the speculation that Administration would establish a self-denying ordinance was a credulity that would disgrace the simplicity of the most simple statesman. In any country it would be folly; but it was madness in Ireland."

"What," he exclaimed, "shall we, who have been doing nothing else but confiding in Government, and who have paid for that confidence millions, shall we now look for retrenchment in the causes of profusion? Is it not somewhat fond to suppose that any Lord Lieutenant, who is not of this country, will commiserate the exhausted state of the people, when her own representatives have thought such a state of debility not an object for concern, but a season for liberality? I am willing, if courtiers desire it, to allow a Lord Lieutenant, under whom we have not yet smarted, everything which I can allow to man, without being impious to our Maker; but I will not allow any Lord Lieutenant of these days either will or ability to retrench the corruption and profusion of the Irish Government to the necessary limit, unless under the compulsive force of the resolution of Parliament."

The motion was of course rejected by an overwhelming majority; but the distress of the country was so appalling that only two or three days after Grattan deemed it his duty to again press the subject upon the attention of Government, by moving an Address to His Majesty declaratory of the distress of the country, the inability of the nation to support the expenses of Government and the necessity for retrenchment and economy. The majority against it, however, was larger than before.

But it was impossible that things could go on in the state in which they were. The country was practically bankrupt. In March, Buckingham advised the Home Government that an enlargement of trade was absolutely necessary for the support of the country, and his opinion was shared by Lord North. Bills for the purpose of removing some of the restrictions on Irish commerce were accordingly submitted to the English Parliament. But the proposal immediately aroused the selfish apprehensions of the English manufacturers. From Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other large towns, there poured forth such a torrent of angry and indignant protest that Ministers were obliged to submit and to reduce their scheme to the most insignificant dimensions. The refusal of the British Legislature to abolish the restrictions on Irish trade excited general dissatisfaction throughout Ireland. The right to plant tobacco and the encouragement offered to cultivate hemp, instead of allaying the discontent, were only regarded by the people as mere mockery and received with contempt. Every day the distress became more appalling. At Dublin and Waterford meetings were held to devise some mode of relief, and resolutions were entered into, which were afterwards generally adopted throughout the kingdom, not to import from Great Britain any articles capable of

being produced by national industry until the unreasonable restrictions on Irish commerce were removed. Public resentment and the mortification of seeing themselves held up to general scorn restrained those who might have felt inclined to prefer their own private interests to those of the country; and in this way employment was found for the wretched, half-starved mechanics; Irish manufactures began to revive and the demand for English goods to decline so perceptibly that the manufacturers of Manchester and Bristol began to show themselves more amenable to reason than they had hitherto been.

Meanwhile the alliance between America and France was exposing Ireland to another and equally pressing danger. The Channel swarmed with French and American privateers, who menaced the coasts and intercepted the communication with England. Denuded as the country was of troops, invasion was every day imminent. The Government, unable to raise a loan of £20,000, was utterly helpless. In this extremity the citizens of Belfast resolved to take their affairs into their own hands and to act as if Government had ceased to exist. Entering into a voluntary armed association, they elected their own officers, provided themselves with arms and ammunition, drilled themselves, and by every means within their power prepared to defend their home and country against the invader. From Belfast the spirit of volunteering spread through the country. Every day brought a new accession to their strength and fresh recruits to their standards. Men of the first consequence in the kingdom were proud of being enrolled in their number, and many persons of independent fortune considered it an honour to appear in their ranks. In the county of Mayo the command was given to Lord Altamont. The Dublin corps was commanded by the

Duke of Leinster, while that of the county of Armagh was entrusted to Lord Charlemont. Though subject to no control but that of their own officers, they were perfectly obedient to discipline, and were remarkable for their sobriety and decent demeanour. The Roman Catholics, though as yet not allowed by the penal laws to enrol themselves or carry arms, showed their ardour in the cause by liberally subscribing for the purchase of guns and other warlike accoutrements. The danger of foreign invasion, the incapacity of Government, the novelty of the thing itself, and the appeal which it made to the military instincts of the nation, conspired to render volunteering the most popular and formidable movement the country had ever known. Government, which had at first hailed the appearance of the volunteers with a profound sigh of relief, and had even endeavoured to foster their ardour by distributing amongst them sixteen thousand muskets, gradually began to look askance at them and to tremble for the consequences as they became more and more powerful. To suppress them Buckingham soon recognized to be quite out of the question, all he could do was to discourage them and to keep them under control as much as possible. Though as yet they had not given public expression to their opinions on the political situation, the well-known sentiment of the great majority of them, backed as it was by an appearance of force, was not without its effect on Parliament, which met on October 12th, 1779.

Grattan and the leaders of the Opposition were not slow to take advantage of the situation. Meeting at Bray, a little village on the sea-coast, about ten miles south of Dublin, now a fashionable watering-place, they resolved to press the situation of the country upon the attention of Government, and to demand the abolition

of all restrictions on Irish commerce. The Speech from the Throne, directing attention to the extraordinary decline in the revenues and to the inadequacy of the liberal supplies voted in the last session to meet the exigencies of Government, but offering no remedial measures, afforded no satisfaction to the Opposition. In a speech of great eloquence, but of which, unfortunately, we have only the barest outline, Grattan denounced the Speech and the Address as an insult to the nation. The distress of the country, he declared, was twofold—the poverty of the people and the bankruptcy of the state. The ill-fated measures of England, in rejecting the commercial concessions, had plunged the nation into hopeless calamities; every condescension had been extended to the monopolising spirit of insignificant towns in England, while the faithful though oppressed people of Ireland could attract neither attention nor pity, but were left to pine, the wretched victims of ingratitude and tyranny. The bankruptcy of the state was, he asserted, the natural consequence of a system of boundless prodigality, profligacy, and violence. It was impossible for the country any longer to support either the Government or the civil list; the prodigality of the Minister had not only destroyed the revenue in Ireland, but had also extended the mischief to England. In short, he concluded, the kingdom was left without supplies; she was left in a situation friendless, mean, and despicable. Abandoned by Government and left to their own resources, he would therefore move that "a free export trade" was absolutely necessary if Ireland was to be saved from ruin. It was soon evident that Grattan carried with him the sense of the House. Hussey Burgh, though still Prime Sergeant, rose and moved that the terms of the amendment should be "free export and import," and Flood that it should

be simply "free trade," and in this last form it was carried without a division. When the Speaker carried up the Address to the Lord-Lieutenant, the streets, from the Parliament House to the Castle, were lined by the Dublin volunteers, under the command of the Duke of Leinster. The acclamations of the people as he passed along gave unequivocal expression to the feelings of joy with which they witnessed this novel sight. Next day votes of thanks were passed by both Houses to the volunteers for their spirited and "necessary exertions" for the defence of the country.

The answer of the King to the Address, expressive of his sincere concern for the distresses of Ireland and his affectionate readiness to concur in such measures as should, upon mature consideration, appear most conducive to the general welfare of all his subjects, was studiously ambiguous, and greatly increased the popular discontent. On November 4th, the anniversary of the birthday of William III., the volunteers of Dublin and the neighbourhood paraded round his monument on College Green, which was hung with the significant inscriptions, "Relief to Ireland;" "The Volunteers of Ireland—quinquaginta millia juncta parati pro patria mori;" while on the two field-pieces in front of it was attached the label "Free Trade or else —." A few days afterwards a serious tumult arose in the Liberties, and a crowd of weavers, dyers, tanners, and other workmen attacked the house of the Attorney-General, stopped the Speaker and other members of Parliament, and obliged them to swear that they would vote "for the good of Ireland, free trade, and a short Money Bill." The military were called out, but the people refused to disperse, and it was only by the exertions of the volunteers that they were at last persuaded to retire quietly to their homes. The

Government, at the request of the House of Commons, offered a reward for the apprehension of the ringleaders; but the Lord Lieutenant complained that the Lord Mayor had been very remiss in repressing the disturbance.

Grattan, who viewed the riots with some alarm, took the first opportunity to recommend to the people the value and importance of moderation: "I would not wish," he said, "to waste one single spark of public fire by any unavailing act of violence or tumult, which would disgust the moderate and terrify the timid; certain that by calmly persisting in their humble and just desires, they will associate in their support all ranks of men." Nevertheless, his own zeal showed no sign of abating. On November 24th, he carried by the unprecedented majority of 170 to 47 a resolution, "that at this time it would be inexpedient to grant new taxes." Next day, when the House had resolved itself into a committee of Supply, the Opposition secured a fresh victory by carrying a resolution that the appropriated duties should be granted for six months only. It was on this occasion that Hussey Burgh finally broke with the Government, and in words that electrified the House said, "Talk not to me of peace; Ireland is not in a state of peace; it is smothered war. England has sown her laws like dragons' teeth, and they have sprung up in armed men." The speech deprived him of his office of Prime Sergeant. As Grattan finely said, "the gates of promotion were shut, as those of glory opened."

The non-importation agreements, the resolute attitude of the volunteers, and the short Money Bill did not fail to produce a visible impression in England. Lord North had already shown himself favourable to a liberal commercial policy towards Ireland; but the voice of reason had then been drowned in the selfish clamours of the

English manufacturers. In December, 1779, however, he laid before Parliament three propositions for the relief of the trade of Ireland. On this occasion he displayed great liberality and knowledge of the subject, and gave an interesting historical sketch of the commercial restrictions of which Ireland complained so much. He proposed to allow Ireland a free export of her wool, woollens, and wool flocks; a free exportation of glass and all kinds of glass manufactures; and a freedom of trade with the British plantations on certain conditions, the basis of which was to be an equality of taxes and customs, upon an equal and unrestrained trade. No opposition was given to these propositions, and bills exactly conformable to them were introduced and passed into laws. Thus fell to the ground that complicated system of commercial restriction which began under Charles II., which, under William III., acquired a crushing severity, and which had received several additional clauses in the succeeding reigns. Government having yielded, naturally desired to reap as much popularity as possible from the concession. The Act was circulated everywhere throughout the country and the civil authorities in Dublin issued orders for a general illumination. The joy of the nation was undoubtedly sincere and universal, but it was very deeply tinged by the reflection that it owed its free trade far more to its own exertions and to the unsheathed sword of the volunteers than to the generosity of England.

CHAPTER II.

STRUGGLE FOR LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE.

1780-1783.

Inadequacy of the commercial concessions—Declaration of Irish Rights —Perpetual Mutiny Bill—Grattan's appeal to the country—Volunteer convention at Dungannon—Indecision of Government —Dissolution of Lord North's Ministry and accession of the Marquis of Rockingham—Recognition of Irish Independence—Public testimonial to Grattan—Origin of the "Simple Repeal" agitation—Strongly opposed by Grattan—Extraordinary revulsion of popular feeling—Marriage—Answer to the Address of the Corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers—English Act of Renunciation passed—Remarks on the Constitution of 1782.

WOULD the Irish rest satisfied with the victory they had won? "The commercial concessions," Buckingham wrote, "had been received with the warmest and most cordial acknowledgment of his Majesty's goodness, with thanks to his Ministers, and the most affectionate expression towards the Parliament of Great Britain." But to a less partial observer it was evident that the recent prolonged agitation, and the success that had ultimately attended it, had inspired the nation with the hope of recovering its legislative independence. A modification of Poynings' Law and the repeal of the Act 6 George I. had always been a favourite topic with Irish patriots. To the arguments of Molyneux and Lucas the recent commercial legislation added another. England, it was said, had conceded free trade; but what guarantee was there

that she would not withdraw it again when less hampered by foreign considerations? That there was a danger of this no one could deny, and in the temper of the nation no one felt inclined to rely wholly upon English generosity. The disavowal by England, therefore, of her claim to legislate for Ireland was the necessary complement of the Act establishing freedom of trade, and the only security against its future abrogation.

This view of the situation was fully shared by Grattan. Early in 1780 he had been presented with the freedom of the guild of Dublin merchants, in acknowledgment of "his steady conduct in Parliament, and his uniform and able exertions to promote the prosperity of Ireland." In his reply he expressed his determination to strain every nerve to effect a modification of Poynings' Law, and to secure Ireland against the illegal claims of the British Parliament. To this end he proposed, on the reassembling of Parliament, to move, "if it seems the general sense, and if no person of more experience undertakes it," a declaration of Irish Rights. Such a measure, he declared, was in his opinion necessary for the security of trade, property, and freedom, and "the only true and effectual method of improving the good understanding between Great Britain and this island into an unaffected confidence and genuine affection." Briefly adverting to an attempt made by Government in the House of Lords to discourage further constitutional agitation, he denounced it as a defiance thrown out to the subjects of the country, which should only incite them the more to insist upon the object they had in view—the freedom of the Irish Parliament, than which they ought not to ask more or take less.

The attitude of Grattan in this matter alarmed not only the Government, but also his own friends, who,

however much they might sympathise with him in his aspirations for legislative independence, deemed it unadvisable and ungenerous to moot the subject at a time when England deserved their gratitude for extending to them a share in the benefits of her commerce, and when her attention was distracted by the revolt of her American colonies. His conduct appeared to them so rash and imprudent that they appealed to Lord Charlemont, fortunately without success, to interpose his authority as proprietor of the borough for which Grattan sat. It was easy after the event to describe their conduct as ignoble; but at the time there was very much more to be said in its favour than against it. The danger of not only losing the commercial advantages they had just gained, but also of involving the country in a civil war, was very real, so real, in fact, as to call forth from Burke an angry protest against the conduct of "that madman Grattan." Grattan, however, manifested no intention of yielding. On the contrary, he used all his influence to bring the question as prominently as possible before the country. For himself, in order to escape the importunities of his friends, he retired to Celbridge Abbey, the residence of his uncle, Colonel Marlay, whose support and encouragement proved a source of infinite satisfaction to him. Here, strolling along the banks of the Liffey amid the groves and bowers sacred to the memory of Swift and Vanessa, he grew convinced that he was right; arguments unanswerable came to his mind and confirmed him in his determination to persevere. On April 19th he brought the subject before Parliament.

"Sir," he said, rising from his seat, and plunging without further exordium into the centre of his subject, "I have entreated an attendance on this day that you might, in the most public manner, deny the claim of the British Parliament to make law for Ireland, and with one voice lift up your hands against it."

Then easily falling into matter of an introductory character, he proceeded:

"If I had lived when the 9th of William took away the woollen manufacture, or when the 6th of George the First declared this country to be dependent and subject to laws to be enacted by the Parliament of England, I should have made a covenant with my own conscience to seize the first moment of rescuing my country from the ignominy of such acts of power; or, if I had a son, I should have administered to him an oath that he would consider himself as a person separate and set apart for the discharge of so important a duty; upon the same principle am I now come to move a declaration of right, the first moment occurring, since my time, in which such a declaration could be made, with any chance of success and without aggravation of oppression."

The recent commercial concessions had not, he asserted, satisfied the people; something still remained to be done; the public heart was not well at ease. The ground of discontent seemed to be the want of security for the commercial concessions; those concessions had been notoriously a matter of expediency, and the same power that had made them could take them away again. No doubt he would be told that these fears were groundless, that the representatives of the principal cities and more than one-half of the counties of the kingdom were misguided men, raising groundless jealousies.

"Sir," he proceeded, "let me become, on this occasion, the people's advocate, and your historian. The people of this country were possessed of a code of liberty, similar to that of Great Britain, but lost it through the weakness of the kingdom and the pusillanimity of its leaders; having lost our liberty by the usurpation of the British Parliament, no wonder we became a prey to her Ministers; and they did plunder us with all the hands of all the harpies for a series of years, in every shape of power, terrifying our people with the thunder of Great Britain and bribing our leaders with the rapine of Ireland. The kingdom became a plantation, her Parliament, deprived of its privileges, fell into contempt; and, with the Legislature, the law, the spirit of liberty, with her forms, vanished. . . . . The principal individuals, possessed of great property but no independency, cor-

rupted by their extravagance or enslaved by their following, a species of English factor against an Irish people, more afraid of the people of Ireland than the tyranny of England, proceeded to such excess that they opposed every proposition to lessen profusion, extend trade, or promote liberty; they did more, they supported a measure which, at one blow, put an end to all trade; they did more, they brought you to a condition which they themselves did unanimously acknowledge a state of impending ruin: they did this, talking as they are now talking, arguing against trade as they now argue against liberty, threatening the people of Ireland with the power of the British nation, and imploring them to rest satisfied with the ruins of their trade, as they now implore them to remain satisfied with the wreck of their Constitution. The people thus admonished, starving in a land of plenty, the victim of two Parliaments, of one that stopped their trade, the other that fed on their Constitution, inhabiting a country where industry was forbid, or towns swarming with begging manufacturers, and being obliged to take into their own hands that part of government which consists in protecting the subject, had recourse to two measures, which, in their origin, progress and consequence, are the most extraordinary to be found in any age, or in any country—viz., a commercial and a military association; the consequence of these measures was instant, the enemy that hung on your shores departed, the Parliament asked for a free trade, and the British nation granted the trade but withheld the freedom. The people of Ireland are therefore not satisfied; they ask for a Constitution; they have the authority of the wisest men in this House for what they now demand."

Doubtless he would be charged with ingratitude, and that by men who were not grateful, who were no better than public extortioners, and who would stop the tide of public prosperity in order to turn it into the channel of their own emolument without the slightest compunction. He only mentioned the argument to despise it. He knew of no species of gratitude which should prevent his country from being free, no gratitude which should oblige Ireland to be the slave of England. A nation's liberty could not, like her treasure, be meted and parcelled out in gratitude. There were certain unimpartable, inherent, invaluable properties, not to be alienated from the person,

whether body politic or body natural. No man could be grateful at the expense of his conscience, no woman at the expense of her honour, no nation at the expense of its liberty.

With the same contempt did he dismiss the charge that Ireland was insatiable. Ireland asked nothing but her rights and privileges of which she had been robbed. To say that Ireland was insatiable because she would not be content with slavery was sheer folly. He laughed at the supposition that Ireland would not be content with a free trade and a free constitution; and would any man advise her to be content with less? For himself he wished for nothing but to breathe in common with his fellow subjects the air of liberty. He had no other ambition than to break the chains which held his country in slavery. The question he reminded the House would not be settled by one adverse vote.

"I will not be answered," he exclaimed, "by a public lie in the shape of an amendment. . . . . I do see the time is at hand, the spirit is gone forth, the declaration is planted; and though great men should apostatize, yet the cause will live; and though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but survive him."

He concluded a speech, which was long remembered as the most splendid piece of oratory in the Irish House of Commons, and which Grattan himself regarded as one of his finest efforts, by moving a series of resolutions to the effect that while the Crown of Ireland was inseparably annexed to that of Great Britain no power on earth, save the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, was competent to make laws for Ireland. During his oration his audience sat spell-bound by the magic of his eloquence. He spoke, said one who heard him, like a man

inspired. At half-past six in the morning, after the debate had lasted nearly fifteen hours, the question was indefinitely adjourned, leaving no entry of it on the Journals of the House. Though defeated in mere point of numbers, Grattan had won a great moral victory. "No British Minister will now, I should hope," he said, "be mad enough to attempt, nor servant of Government desperate enough to execute, nor Irish subject mean enough not to resist, by every means in his power, a British Act of Parliament." "It is with the utmost concern," wrote Buckingham to Lord Hillsborough, "I must acquaint your Lordship that, although so many gentlemen expressed their concern that the subject had been introduced, the sense of the House against the obligation of any statutes of the Parliament of Great Britain within this Kingdom is represented to me to have been almost unanimous." The effect which it had on the country was very great. From all sides Addresses flowed in upon him, thanking him for his spirited and patriotic conduct. "Finish what you have so ably begun," wrote the volunteers of Londonderry; "see our grievances effectually redressed, our rights fully established. In this great work we are determined to support you with our lives and our fortunes."

In July, Grattan accompanied Lord Charlemont, who had been elected Commander-in-Chief of the Ulster volunteers, on a tour of inspection through the north of Ireland. The result was most gratifying. The popularity of the volunteers was unbounded. Both on their way thither and at the places where they were reviewed they were entertained at free quarters by the people, who were sensible of their merits and delighted with the novelty of their appearance. Their patriotic addresses to Charlemont and Grattan, while they served to stimulate

their own ardour, encouraged their officers, and made a deep impression on the country at large. As Charlemont said, it was impossible to contemplate such a line of strength and not to entertain the most decided sentiments in favour of liberty. Meanwhile profound peace and order prevailed throughout the country. The laws were better obeyed than they had ever been. The volunteers enforced obedience; they escorted the Judges at the Assizes, conveyed the prisoners to the several towns, and diffused a spirit of order and respect for the law as delightful as it was novel.

Grattan had expressed his opinion that after the debate on the Declaration of Rights no servant of the Crown would be desperate enough to execute, no Irish subject mean enough to obey a British Act of Parliament. An event now occurred which curiously confirmed his opinion. Hitherto the Irish army had been regulated by an English Mutiny Bill. The validity of it had, however, been impugned in Parliament, and early in March the question was brought to an issue by the refusal of two magistrates to convict certain deserters on the ground that there was no Irish Act compelling them to remain in the ranks. The case foretold by Grattan had thus actually occurred. In order, accordingly, to obviate this serious difficulty, and in conformity with the general sentiment, a Mutiny Bill was introduced into the Irish House of Commons. It passed by a large majority, and was transmitted to England for sanction. But on being returned in August it was found to have been altered, and the clause limiting its operation to one year struck out. This wanton and most foolish insult to the national sentiment was immediately resented by Grattan. Parliament, however, tamely submitted, as it did also to a Sugar Bill, altered in such a way as almost wholly to destroy the good effects

of the commercial concessions. Declaring that the Bill had not been returned until the pulse of certain individuals had been felt, and a majority procured for supporting it, Grattan expressed his determination to secede, and to appeal to the people in a "formal instrument." The day following the debate he wrote to his friend Day suggesting that the constituencies should be worked upon to return thanks to those of their representatives who had supported the Declaration of Right, and to express their hope that they would continue to press for a modification of Poynings' Law and a limitation of the Mutiny Act, "inasmuch as they conceive a perpetual mutiny law to be unconstitutional and dangerous to freedom in general." His suggestion was acted on with great alacrity and with good results. Petition after petition flowed in demanding a limited Mutiny Act and a short Money Bill. In September Parliament was prorogued and Buckingham recalled. Nevertheless, the agitation continued to gather new strength every day, and the anniversary of William's birthday was again the occasion of a great popular demonstration in Dublin. On the reassembling of Parliament in the autumn of 1781 Grattan moved for leave to introduce a limited Mutiny Bill, when he was eloquently supported by Flood, who, "after an eclipse of seven years," again threw in his lot against Government. The motion was defeated by 177 to 33, and Grattan immediately carried out his threat of appealing to the people in a "formal instrument." The "Observations on the Mutiny Bill" is at once an appeal to the people and a panegyric on the volunteers. The demand for national freedom was not, he declared, the measure of a faction:

"It was not the act of a party, but of a people, rising up like one man to claim their freedom; a whole people, long depressed and

cruelly derided, flocking together with the most perfect order, and each individual, man by man, from his own lips preferring his right to be free. . . . . Neither was this great act confined to one persuasion; but Protestant and Papist, their ancient animosity in such a cause subsiding, signed the same declaration of right; and those whom neither time, nor severity, nor lenity, nor the penal code, nor its relaxation, had been able to unite, in freedom found a rapid reconciliation; a certain flame rectified the humours of superstition. The time had arrived when the spirit of truth and liberty should descend upon the man of Romish persuasion, and touch his Catholic lips with public fire. He was tried and was found faithful; he was weighed in the balance and proved sufficient. We have learned at last a simple but great truth, that one man is like another, and that all men wish to be free."

The spirit of the nation, he assured them, was a much better safeguard for their liberties than Parliament. He conjured them to keep what they had got and to preserve their armed associations.

"You," he said, addressing the volunteers, "you are the great charter of the Irish nation; our efficient cause and final hope. Prompted by you we have conceived a vast image of our own greatness, —prompted by you, we have spoken definitively to Great Britain, and, astonishing her pride and awakening her justice, have stated in one sentence the provocation of a century. . . . . I have heard your legality disputed. Conscious as I am that no law prohibits the subject to arm, convinced as I am of your legality, I conceive that question to be lost in the immensity of your numbers. And with the pomp and power and trade, and all that train which await your progress, I shall not stop your army to ask, what law has made you? Sufficient that there is no law against you; sufficient that without you there would be neither law nor liberty. Go on and prosper, thou sword of justice and shield of freedom, the living source of an ancient flame,—the foundation of our pride, a providential interposition,—an army enriching the land with industry, costing the State nothing, adequate to all her enemies, and greater than all her revenues could pay,—awful indeed to the tyrant, but to a just prince unconquerable strength. The custody of the nation's character is in your hands. Go on and multiply, and add immortal security to the cause of your country."

The effect of this appeal was such that Government

thought it advisable to employ a certain Dr. Jebb to answer it, but without any further result, as Jebb himself afterwards candidly admitted, than that it procured for him an annuity of £300. Grattan's advice had indeed fallen into minds well prepared to receive it, and the great Convention that met at Dungannon in February, 1782, was a sufficient reply to the Government, which had tried to make believe that the agitation for Parliamentary independence was but the "convulsions of an expiring faction." The idea, which had suggested itself to the officers of the southern battalion of the Armagh regiment, of calling on the different volunteer associations in Ulster to send delegates to Dungannon in order to discuss the situation of the kingdom, at a time when they had again earned the thanks of Parliament for their spirited and patriotic exertions in defence of the kingdom against a threatened invasion by France in the autumn, greatly annoyed and alarmed the Government. Even to Charlemont and his friends the necessity for exercising a strict control over their debates was very manifest. Accordingly he, Grattan, and Flood, met together at Charlemont House, where a series of resolutions, embracing a modification of Poynings' Law, a limitation of the Mutiny Bill, and a relaxation of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics, was prepared for adoption by the Convention. On February 15th, 242 delegates, representing 143 associations, assembled together in the great church of Dungannon. After a serious deliberation, lasting from twelve o'clock to eight in the evening, the resolutions of Charlemont House were adopted with scarcely a dissentient voice, together with an Address to the minority in both Houses of Parliament, thanking them for their noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts in defence of the great constitutional

and commercial rights of their country. Thus ended the business of that ever memorable day. Their moderation and their resolutions in favour of the Roman Catholics won for them general admiration and respect and disappointed the expectations of Government, who had hoped that their violence would defeat the object of their meeting. A few days afterwards Grattan moved an Address to his Majesty declaratory of the independence of the Irish Legislature. His speech comprised a full review of the authorities in favour of his doctrine. The claim of England to legislate for Ireland, he asserted, rested simply on force, and to such a claim the volunteers were a sufficient answer. Pointing to them he appealed to the House of Commons.

"How," he asked, "do you mean to proceed? Submit, and take the lead in the desertion? Impossible! The strength which at your back supports your virtue, precludes your apostasy; the armed presence of the nation will not bend; the community will not be sold; nor will a nation in arms suffer the eternal blessing of freedom and renown to depend on the experiment, whether this villain shall be a pensioner, or that pickpocket shall be a peer."

Before they decided on being slaves for ever he bade them look to America, fresh from her victory over England. "Do you," he asked, "see nothing in that America but the grave and prison of your armies? and do you not see in her range of territory, cheapness of living, variety of climate, and simplicity of life, the drain of Europe? Whatever is bold and disconsolate, sullen virtue and wounded pride," he predicted—and history has since confirmed his prophecy—"all, all to that point will precipitate, and what you trample on in Europe will sting you in America." Pointing to those who objected to weary the ear of Majesty with their Addresses, he asked in scorn: "Are the princes of the earth more

vigilant than the Almighty, that you should besiege the throne of mercy with your solicitations and hold it unnecessary to admonish the King? or do you wait till your country speaks to you in thunder?" Though strongly supported, the motion was rejected by 137 to 68. Nevertheless the Dungannon Convention, though apparently powerless to move Parliament, was not without its influence on the country at large. Grand juries, cities, towns, corporations, parishes, all ranks and degrees of men, following the example it had set and animated by the same sentiments, spoke out boldly in behalf of the privileges of their country. An intimation that Grattan would again, on April 16th, move a declaration of Irish independence, so alarmed the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, that, on March 27th, he ventured to suggest to the Home Government that the repeal of the Declaratory Act of 6 George I. might perhaps be a measure equally becoming and wise.

"I have in former letters," he wrote to Lord Hillsborough, "observed to your Lordship that my Government on every other point has the support of a most respectable and very large majority, and even resisted this particular question in several shapes in the course of the present session, but that under the universal eagerness which has taken place through the kingdom to have this claim decided, I cannot expect the friends of administration to sacrifice for ever their weight among their countrymen by a resistance which would possibly lead to serious consequences."

But before this letter reached its destination the Government of Lord North had ceased to exist. Overwhelmed by the failure of his American policy, the Premier had announced on March 20th that he and his colleagues only retained office until their successors could be appointed. After some futile opposition on the part of the King, the Rockingham Administration, with Shelburne and Fox as Secretaries of State, was formed;

and on April 14th the Duke of Portland and Mr. FitzPatrick arrived in Dublin in the capacities of Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary. The difficulties confronting the new Irish Government were very great. Only two days were to elapse till Parliament reassembled, and under circumstances regarded by every one as most momentous. On March 14th, just before the adjournment for the Easter recess, Grattan had given notice that on April 16th he would again move a declaration of Irish independence, and in order to emphasise the solemnity of the occasion he had proposed and carried a motion that the Speaker should write circular letters to the members, ordering them to attend that day as they regarded the rights of the Irish Parliament. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was very natural that the Government should have endeavoured to obtain a short adjournment, in order to enable it to grasp the significance of the situation, and to arrange a satisfactory settlement of the question. But, though reasonable in itself, Grattan and Charlemont were equally opposed to the proposal. It was, they declared, quite impossible to postpone the question. The declaration of legislative independence was expected by the people with the utmost impatience.

"The minds of all men," wrote Charlemont to Fox, "are so anxiously fixed upon the events of that day, which they have every reason to imagine will be favourable to their wishes, that I should greatly fear the consequence of any postponement, especially as, from sad experience, the people have been taught to suppose that a question postponed is at the least weakened."

So careful were they not to offend the prejudices of the people, or to do anything that might weaken their position, that they not only refused to accept office, but Grattan even carried his precaution so far as to refuse

FitzPatrick the interview which he solicited until the question had been decided by Parliament. At last the day arrived which was to give freedom to Ireland and to mark the culmination of Grattan's popularity. The streets of Dublin were everywhere thronged by an excited but orderly crowd. The galleries of the House were very early in the day filled by a brilliant and sympathetic audience; while in the body of the House itself there was scarcely a vacant seat to be found. After the Speaker had taken the chair, and the Speech from the Throne had been read and a formal Address of thanks proposed, Grattan rose to make his amendment. As he stood pale and weak from the effects of a recent surgical operation, every eye was directed towards him with eager expectation as if the fate of the nation depended on him and him alone. The first words that fell from his lips struck the keynote of his position. "I am now," he said, "to address a free people: ages have passed away, and this is the first moment in which you could be distinguished by that appellation." It was no longer argument that was wanted. The victory had already been won, and Ireland was once more a nation. The end of the long struggle had come at last. The spirit of Swift and Molyneux had prevailed. The nation that had so long sat in bondage had shaken off its fetters and triumphed over the Government. To the nation in arms, to the volunteers they that day owed the independence of Parliament. And now having given a Parliament to the people, he hoped and doubted not that the volunteers would retire and leave the people to Parliament, and thus close specifically and majestically their great work. Like other institutions these associations, he predicted, would perish. They would perish with the occasion that gave them being, and the gratitude of their country would write

their epitaph and say, "This phenomenon, the departed Volunteer, justified only by the occasion, the birth of spirit and grievances, with some alloy of public evil, did more public good to Ireland than all her institutions; he restored the liberties of his country, and thus from the grave he answers his enemies." He concluded by declaring the ground of Irish discontents to be a foreign Legislature, a foreign Judicature, a legislative Privy Council, and a perpetual army. The Address thus amended was seconded by Brownlow and passed unanimously. A few days afterwards the House was adjourned to the 4th and then to the 27th of May, in order to await the King's reply.

That England would yield Grattan had little doubt. What had already passed on both sides had rendered the claim of England impracticable. So he wrote to Fox on April 18th. If, however, she chose to reject the Irish ultimatum, he was prepared to support the claim of Ireland by an appeal to arms. Under the circumstances, therefore, procrastination was inadmissible. On May 11th, after the second adjournment, he wrote to his friend Day, who was at that time in London, to inform the Ministry that if nothing had been concluded when Parliament reassembled on the 27th, he would be obliged to proceed as if the claim of Ireland had been rejected. But, much as he might have preferred to proceed in the matter by negotiation, Fox had already made up his mind to a full concession of the Irish demands. He would, he said, "meet Ireland on her own terms, and give her everything she wanted in the way she herself seemed to wish for it." His promise was faithfully kept. A Bill repealing the obnoxious Act of 6 George I. was introduced, and in due time carried through the English Parliament. Thus, when the Irish

Parliament reassembled on May 27th, the Duke of Portland was able to announce that the King was prepared to give his unconditional assent to their requests. Immediately after the Speech from the Throne had been read, Grattan rose to express in the strongest terms his full satisfaction with the conduct of the Government. He understood, he said, that Great Britain gave up *in toto* every claim to authority over Ireland. He had no idea that in repealing the 6 George I., she should be bound to declare that she had formerly usurped a power. This would be a foolish caution, a dishonourable condition, and the nation that insisted on the humiliation of another nation was a foolish nation. He suggested that they should show their gratitude by a vote of £100,000 and 20,000 men for the support of the British navy, and thus make it manifest to the world that Ireland was prepared to stand or fall with England. Finally, he moved an Address, stating that the unqualified repeal of 6 George I. would form a pledge of amity between the two nations; that they would prepare Bills to carry into execution the desires of the people; and that, gratified in these particulars, no constitutional question could exist which would interrupt their harmony. Some objection was taken to this last clause, but it was not sustained, and the Address was agreed to with only two dissentients.

Before the House separated, Mr. Beauchamp Bagenal gave notice that on the morrow, after the House had evinced its gratitude to Almighty God by appointing a day of thanksgiving "for the many blessings of late bestowed on the kingdom, and particularly for that union, harmony, and cordial affection, happily subsisting between the two kingdoms," he would move that the House should resolve itself into committee "to take into consideration what sum we should grant for the purchas-

ing an estate, and building a suitable mansion for our illustrious benefactor, Henry Grattan, Esq., and his heirs for ever, in testimony of our gratitude for the unequalled service that he has done for the kingdom of Ireland." It was a graceful and appropriate conclusion to a great and successful struggle. On no single man had the burden of that struggle fallen so completely as on Grattan. To the confidence which his transparent integrity inspired in English Ministers and Irish people alike was due the victory which was that day consummated. It may be said, and justly said, that without the moral support which the volunteer associations gave him his efforts would probably have ended, as had those of his predecessors, in failure. But even this consideration does not detract from his merit. With Charlemont, he was the first to recognise the political significance of the volunteer movement. When Flood held timidly back Grattan flung to the wind all scruples as to the legality of a people agitating with arms in their hands. To take up arms and agitate for freedom he declared to be the inalienable right of every citizen. With all the eloquence at his command he encouraged them and bade them go on and increase in number and efficiency. Thus, by his single-hearted devotion to his country, by his unflagging zeal, by his wonderful political sagacity, by his ceaseless watchfulness, by his splendid eloquence, by his unflinching determination in the face of friends and foes alike, did he achieve the freedom of his country and earn the gratitude of his countrymen. Nor were they slow to show their appreciation of his services. The munificent present of £50,000, which Parliament voted him, and which, after many scruples, he was induced to accept, merely gave expression to the general sentiment of the nation. A comparatively poor man, it had been his

intention to resume his practice at the bar. The generosity of his country had removed this hateful necessity from his way, but it had also laid obligations on him, which to a sensitive mind like his were doubly sacred.

In moving the Address to his Majesty, on May 27th, 1782, Grattan had expressed his belief that by consenting to repeal the Declaratory Act of 6 George I., Great Britain had surrendered *in toto* every claim to authority over Ireland, and in so doing had rendered it impossible for any constitutional question to arise between the two countries that could disturb their mutual tranquillity. To this view of the case, as already remarked, objection had at the time been taken by two or three members.

"I cannot possibly," said Mr. Walshe, "agree to that part of the Address—'that there will no longer exist any constitutional question between the two nations that can disturb their mutual tranquillity.' These expressions I think too strong, because, in my opinion, they preclude any future Address, if it should be found that any matter had not been stated in the former Address that required amendment or regulation. With respect to the repeal of the 6th of Geo. I., I rely on it, as a lawyer, that it is inadequate to the emancipation of Ireland. The 6th of Geo. I. is merely a declaratory law—that law declares that England has a power to make laws to bind Ireland. What, then, does the repeal of the 6th of Geo. I. do with respect to Ireland? Simply this, and not a jot more—it expunges the declaration of the power from the English statute book, but it does not deny the power hereafter to make laws to bind Ireland whenever England shall think herself in sufficient force for the purpose. I call upon the King's Attorney-General, as a lawyer, to rise in his place and declare whether the assumed and usurped power of England to make laws to bind Ireland will not remain untouched and unrelinquished, though the 6th of Geo. I. should be repealed. Will it be contended that this assumed power of Great Britain to legislate for us can be taken away by implication? No lawyer will say it can. Then Ireland cannot be said to be completely emancipated until England, by an Act of her own Legislature, unequivocally and expressly declares that she has no power to make laws to bind us in any instance whatever. I say, until

this is done, Ireland can never have a sincere affection for or confidence in Great Britain."

This objection, which at first appeared almost too contemptible to be noticed, gradually assumed such proportions as in the end to completely overshadow and eclipse, in the minds of the people, the significance of the repeal of the Declaratory Act of 6 George I. Flood, who would have been more than mortal had he been able to witness the triumph of Grattan without some feeling of jealousy towards him, especially when he reflected that he himself might have been the recipient of the national testimonial, adopted it, and gave to it all the support of his great authority. On June 11th he asked the Chief Secretary, FitzPatrick, whether the Bill that had been introduced into the English Parliament was only a simple repeal, or whether it contained any declaration for giving up the declaratory right assumed by England. To this the Secretary replied that he believed it was to be a mere repeal, but, as the Bill had not passed, no judgment or proceeding could well be had upon it, because it might be altered. Thereupon Flood entered into an elaborate argument to prove the inconclusiveness and unsatisfactoriness of a simple repeal. The conduct of Great Britain had, he declared, been most judicious. She had yielded to the force of circumstances, and consented to repeal the Declaratory Act. Nevertheless, he proceeded, it must ever be her wish to retain the principle of it, because it is the principle of power, which no nation has ever relinquished while it could maintain it. By seeming to yield unconditionally she had "seized on the generous credulity" of the Irish people; and, taking advantage of a change in her own Administration, had consented that the Declaratory Act ought to be repealed, but not that it ought to be repealed because it had been a false and

erroneous declaration of law. Far from it; not a man in the British Parliament held that idea. The House, however, suspicious perhaps of his motives, declined almost unanimously to enter into the subject.

Unfortunately, there just now occurred a series of events in England which seemed to give some colouring to the charge of duplicity which Flood had preferred against the English Ministry. It was, of course, only natural that in England, as well as in Ireland, differences of opinion should have existed in regard to the repeal of the Declaratory Act. To some it seemed insufficient as a guarantee of Irish liberty; to others it appeared an encroachment upon English rights. Already, on May 17th, Lord Beauchamp had, from his seat in the English House of Commons, expressed his belief that Simple Repeal would not satisfy the Irish, unless some counter-declaratory clause should be inserted in the repealing Act. This doctrine he had further elaborated in a "Letter to the 1st Belfast Company of Volunteers," which was widely read and much commented upon. On the other hand, Lord Abingdon—a not very conspicuous member of the House of Lords—had moved for leave to bring in a Bill declaring the right of the Parliament of Great Britain to regulate and control the whole external commerce and foreign trade of Ireland, and repealing any legislation that withdrew any portion of the commerce of Ireland from its control. The Bill, it is true, was never suffered to lie on the table; but, taken in connection with the fact that two trade Bills had passed through the English Parliament in which Ireland, though not expressly mentioned, was understood to be included in general terms, it caused considerable excitement in Ireland. A decision some time afterwards by Lord Mansfield of an Irish law case that had come up on appeal to

the Court of King's Bench before the late Act had passed, seemed also to impugn its validity from another point of view.

Taking advantage of the general feeling of distrust and alarm awakened by these events, Flood again brought the subject before Parliament on July 19th, and moved for leave to bring in heads of a Bill for the purpose of affirming the sole and exclusive right of the Irish Parliament to make laws internal and external for the kingdom of Ireland. To Grattan, Flood's conduct was most distasteful. Believing as he did that England had relinquished every claim to authority over Ireland, and that Fox had not only acted honestly, but even generously in the matter, he regarded the present agitation as not only factious and ungrateful, but also in the highest degree detrimental to the best interests of Ireland. Of all things, Ireland in his opinion stood most in need of tranquillity. The agitation for repeal had brought the country to the verge of a civil war. The passions of the people had been roused to the highest pitch of indignation against England. It was a necessary evil, so long as England asserted her claim to legislate for Ireland. But now that she had surrendered that claim fully and frankly it behoved every true patriot to lay aside all feelings of national enmity, to cease from further agitation and to turn his attention to the development of the resources of his country. Holding these views and considerably piqued by Flood's attempt to detract from the merit of his great measure, he replied to him with not a little warmth and asperity. He much regretted, he said, that the subject had been renewed, that the House had been made the theatre of envy, ostentation, and egotism, and that the public time should have been wasted in discussing a subject which owed its origin to rancour and

disappointed ambition. He rose with peculiar reluctance and only because he felt it incumbent upon him to say something in defence of himself and others, who had taken an early, active, and uniform part in the struggle for independence at a time when those who had since become clamorous were silent. It was easy, he declared, for men to express their zeal when the difficulty was over and the battle won; just as it was easy for the coward to enter the city after the breach had been made; but the activity of both was in each case a proof that the business was done and the danger over. The whole agitation was rotten and despicable. What was it they wanted? Legal security! Security given by an English Act of Parliament! Did they not know that no law could bind England in her transactions with other nations except the law of nations? He begged the House not to believe an honourable member when he said that the repeal of 6th George I. had done nothing, and that England had "seized upon the generous credulity" of Ireland. "Believe me," he said, "there was a splendour in your moderation and a force in your fidelity. You prescribed to yourself a sacred precinct, and when England yielded you scorned to advance; your spirit did not depend on the concession of England, it was an inherent quality of the mind. Thus have you sealed a treaty with Great Britain. On the one side, the restoration of the final judicature, the extinction of her legislative claim, of her Privy Council, of her Perpetual Mutiny Bill, the repeal of the Act of Legislative Supremacy—on your side, satisfaction; and thus are the two nations compacted for ever in freedom and in peace."

Flood's motion was negatived without a division.

Very different, however, was the situation of affairs outside the House. The logic of Flood, the Bill of Lord Abingdon,

the pamphlets and proceedings of Lord Beauchamp, the Trade Laws including Ireland, and the appeals in the English House of Lords, created a widespread impression that the recent measures were wholly incomplete and unsatisfactory. The papers began to teem with letters on the subject. The volunteers discussed it and passed resolutions condemning simple repeal as utterly inadequate and reflecting on the conduct of Grattan and the Parliament.

The effect produced on Grattan's mind by this sudden revulsion of popular feeling and the strain and anxiety of the recent session rendered it desirable that he should go abroad for a short time. The change was immediately beneficial to him. On August 17th, Lord Charlemont wrote to Haliday:

"I have had a letter from our friend Harry, dated Shrewsbury. He was then getting better, and writes in tolerable spirits. I am heartily glad he is out of this pestilential atmosphere, and am certain that the change of air and scene will do him more good even than the waters of Spa. To a delicate mind popular ingratitude must be grating indeed."

The situation of affairs in Ireland, however, continued to weigh upon his mind. The more he thought about it the more vicious in principle did the renunciation agitation appear to him. The question was how to put a stop to the agitation without yielding renunciation. A discussion by some prominent men in the English Parliament, to the effect that England had nothing more to yield; that the question was settled and could not be reopened, would, he thought, be attended with beneficial results, the more so as from Lord Charlemont's account it appeared that the discontent had not reached the bulk of the people; and he accordingly suggested to Mr., afterwards Lord Perry, Speaker of the Irish House of

Commons, at that time in London, that the subject should be broached to the English Ministry.

"I am sure," he wrote, "this would do great justice to the sincerity of those who transacted the late settlement; and Government are, in my mind, not a little interested in maintaining the sufficiency of the settlement itself, and the character of those whose credit would give strength and authority to their support of administration. You know, Sir, what weight conversations in the British Parliament are felt to have in Ireland, and how easy it is for the British minister to make a faction here ashamed of itself—at least, to make others so."

Nothing, however, came of the suggestion. The British Ministry had other and more pressing concerns on hand. On July 1st, the Marquis of Rockingham died, and his death was immediately followed by the resignation of Fox and Lord John Cavendish, leaving the reins of power in the hands of Lord Shelburne and the Tory section of the Rockingham Ministry. A day or two afterwards Parliament was prorogued and did not meet again till December.

Having fully recovered his health, Grattan returned to Dublin about the end of October, and soon afterwards married Miss Henrietta Fitzgerald. Descended on her father's side from the Fitzgeralds of Desmond, and on her mother's from the Stevensons of county Down, Miss Fitzgerald was distinguished as much for her mental accomplishments as for her personal charms. To a singularly amiable and gentle disposition, she united a spirit of heroic fortitude, which enabled her to bear with equanimity an illness which attacked her on the very eve of her marriage, and which left her a confirmed invalid. On more than one occasion, and particularly during the trying times of the Rebellion, did her courage animate and sustain the drooping spirits of her husband. The estate which the generosity of Parliament had enabled Grattan to purchase was situated in the Queen's County, along the

river Barrow; but though fertile, the place possessed few attractions of scenery, and his thoughts naturally reverted to Wicklow, where he had long ago resolved, when rambling about the country with his friend Broome, to retire out of the noise and bustle of city life. The little hamlet of Tinnehinch, where he ultimately settled down, and whither shortly after his marriage he conducted his young bride, lies half-way between the Dargle and Powerscourt, picturesquely situated on the side of the mountain, whose dark shades form a perfect contrast to the extreme beauty and lively verdure of the valley below, with its brawling stream, and gently swelling lawns, dotted here and there with tidy white-washed farmsteads.

But even into this secluded spot did the cares and vexations of political life follow him. The question of "Simple Repeal" still continued to excite and agitate the popular mind. The Lawyers' corps of volunteers, which had taken up the subject at an early period and appointed a committee to consider it, had decided that a voluntary and express renunciation on the part of Great Britain of all claim of right to bind Ireland either externally or internally would give great satisfaction to the country, and render the union between the two kingdoms permanent and indissoluble. This expression of opinion had naturally, coming from so high an authority, great weight with the rest of the volunteers, and on December 1st the Corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers, of which Grattan was colonel, unanimously resolved that an Address, endorsing the decision of the Lawyers' Corps, should be presented to him. Grattan's reply was couched in courteous but determined terms. He most explicitly declined to subscribe to the resolutions or to acknowledge the necessity for them.

"The natural result," he concluded, "of my dissent is the ceasing of my command. I do not resign, lest peremptory resignation should appear an act of unmanly offence; in the succession of officers you have an opportunity to indulge the range of your disposition; invited to the command without solicitation, I shall render back the honour without the emotions of resentment, or the affectation of indifference. In the warm hours of your panegyric I made every allowance for a sanguine disposition; in the present hour, when the same disposition may go in the other direction, I shall make the same allowance. There is a final justice in public opinion on which I do not fear to stand."

The fact was, the popular party had passed wholly out of Grattan's control. On September 15th, Lord Temple, the Duke of Portland's successor, arrived in Ireland. His first despatches gave an alarming account of the situation of affairs in that country. The agitation, he declared, had swollen enormously. Government, except by the volunteers, had practically ceased to exist. Those to whom the people looked up with confidence were not the Parliament, but a body of armed men composed chiefly of the middling and lower orders, influenced by no one, but leading those who affected to guide them. His first thought was that by resolutely opposing the authority of Parliament to them, the back of the agitation might be broken. But the unlucky decision of Lord Mansfield at this juncture caused him at once to alter his opinion. The honour of England and the Government was at stake. He had over and over again asserted that repeal meant renunciation. To recede from this position was impossible. "I cannot," he wrote to Lord Townshend on December 14th, "hesitate to say that the public faith of the nation and the private honour of individuals are committed." The only ground of public tranquillity, as it seemed to him, was the general belief that Government would explain Lord Mansfield's action, and this was evidently impossible without yielding the express renunciation that was demanded.

Accordingly, immediately after the English Parliament assembled, on January 22nd, 1783, Secretary Townshend moved for leave to bring in a Bill "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and Courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature, and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of his Majesty's Courts in this kingdom from being received, heard, or adjudged in any of his Majesty's Courts in the kingdom of Great Britain." In taking this course, he declared, nothing was further from his intention and that of the Government than to impeach the mode of proceeding of the previous Administration. Far from it; he believed that sincerity and wisdom had guided their steps, only some untoward circumstances had intervened to prevent them producing all the good effect that might have been expected from them, particularly a late decision in the English Court of King's Bench, which had excited jealousies in the breasts even of the best intentioned men in Ireland. He therefore hoped that his motion might pass unanimously, in order that the people of Ireland might be convinced that England meant fairly when she set out to remove the causes of their jealousies and discontents. The motion met with practically no opposition; Fox explaining that though he saw no necessity for the proposal he would not oppose it, as it seemed to him perfectly harmless.

This, it need hardly be said, was not Grattan's opinion. He had repeatedly declared that he would reject even Magna Charta under a British statute. But in this respect, whether rightly or wrongly, public opinion was dead against him, and even Charlemont, who agreed with him in his dislike for renunciation, felt obliged to admit that it had at last become a measure absolutely necessary if

the public mind was to be tranquillised. The conduct of the Ministry, however, was universally regarded as highly honourable to England and completely satisfactory to Ireland. When Lord Temple communicated the intention of his colleagues to introduce a Renunciation Bill into the English Parliament, he found in every one the strongest impression of the national good faith with which Great Britain had acted at a moment when her external situation might possibly have given another turn to her councils.

Whatever may have been the merits of this measure, and for my own part I am inclined to side with Grattan, in believing that it would have been better for Ireland at the time had the public mind not been disquieted on a subject which, as the event proved, was of no real importance, this last act of the British Parliament was generally regarded as setting the coping-stone on a revolution which Burke described as the Irish analogue of the Revolution of 1688. England had now, it was believed, distinctly and for ever abandoned all claim to interfere in the legislation of Ireland. Ireland was now, in Grattan's words, no longer a mere province, but a free and independent nation. The only tie that linked her fortunes to those of England was that of the Crown. It is easy for us to see how fallacious was this view of the situation and how superficial was the resemblance between the Irish Revolution and that of 1688. At the time however, both nations agreed in exaggerating the importance of the transaction. The event proved that Ireland was no more free from English influence after the Acts of Repeal and Renunciation than she was before. True the English Parliament could no longer openly interfere in the affairs of Ireland; but none the less were her councils still controlled by English Ministers wholly.

irresponsible for their conduct to the Irish Parliament. On this hidden rock the new Constitution, set afloat with such incredible pains and hailed with such rapturous applause, eventually struck and foundered. With a House of Commons, two-thirds of which was under the control of private borough holders, very many of whom were not inspired by the lofty patriotic motives that animated Lord Charlemont, it was inevitable that whenever the interests of the Irish people clashed with the views of the English Ministry the latter should be tempted to have recourse to corrupt methods in order to tune Parliament to their pleasure. This, indeed, was what really happened. Instead of diminishing, as it ought to have done, British influence continued, after a very brief interval, to increase enormously. Nor was the deteriorating influence which corruption had on the individual members of the House of Commons the least deplorable of all the evil effects which followed from this fatal oversight in the Constitution of 1782.

CHAPTER III.

QUESTION OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

1783.

The question mooted—State of the representation—Volunteer meeting at Dungannon—Dissolution of Parliament—Necessity for retrenchment—Quarrel between Grattan and Flood—Volunteer Convention—Bill for the more equal representation of the people—Rejected by Parliament—Conduct of Grattan—Dissolution of the Convention—Quarrel between Grattan and Charlemont.

To Grattan the "Simple Repeal" agitation came as a terrible disaster, not merely because it lowered him individually in the estimation of his countrymen, but far more because it prevented the people settling quietly down and making the best of the benefits they had already acquired. He had hoped that after having given a Parliament to the people the volunteers would have left the people to Parliament. Even when using them to wrest a constitution from England he had been fully alive to the dangerous qualities of the weapon he was employing. And it was only because he believed in the absolute necessity of achieving Parliamentary independence at all risks, and the impossibility of obtaining it, except with their assistance, that he had ventured to throw the sword of the volunteers into the balance. Their unexceptionable conduct, and above all their moderation, had rendered the task an easy and a comparatively harmless one. But now that the nation had

secured its independence it was of all things the most important in his opinion that they should retire and leave to Parliament the completion of the work they had begun. That much still remained to be done in the matter of internal reform he clearly recognized, and he had no doubt about the capacity and willingness of Parliament to undertake the task. Unfortunately his advice had not prevailed, and the result of the recent agitation had been not only to increase the power of the volunteers by inspiring them with the belief that it was only through their agency that any reform could be carried; but it had visibly lowered Parliament and parliamentary methods in the estimation of the people at large. The situation was grave in the extreme. The determined opposition which the House of Commons had offered to the renunciation movement was severely criticised, not only privately but also at the public meetings of the volunteers, and the necessity for bringing it more into harmony with the general sentiment of the people openly canvassed.

"One event, and one only," wrote an able exponent of this view to Flood, in the beginning of 1783, "is wanting to secure perfect freedom to my people. They are freed from an odious tyranny, but they have that many-headed monster to subdue at home. The same wisdom which made it convenient that the community be represented by few, makes it indispensably requisite that that representation be as perfect as possible, that thereby, as in a mirror, the people's sentiments may be faithfully exhibited. . . . . Without pursuing this necessary improvement of your Constitution, you will have a corrupt legislation perpetually hanging over you, the same legislation which has proved the source of all your evils."

To all these strictures on the Irish Parliament, Grattan would willingly have assented. Indeed, quite apart from the fact that the Roman Catholics, comprising quite two-thirds of the entire population, were wholly without representation, the state of the Legislature was extremely

defective. From an inquiry instituted about this time, it appeared that out of a House of 300 members, 124 were nominated by 53 peers, while 91 others were chosen by 52 commoners. Already in March, 1783, a political assembly of volunteers at Cork had passed resolutions in favour of Parliamentary reform. Their example was speedily followed by certain volunteer associations in Ulster, and on July 1st, at a meeting held at Lisburn, at which were present delegates from 45 companies, it was resolved to convoke a general assembly of all the volunteers of Ulster to meet at Dungannon in September, for the purpose of considering the best method for securing a more equal representation of the people in Parliament. Accordingly, on Monday, September 8th, there assembled in the Dissenting Chapel of Dungannon at least 500 delegates, representing 272 companies. A variety of resolutions advocating Parliamentary reform were passed by them, and a national convention of volunteers was arranged to be held in Dublin on November 10th, to which the volunteer companies in the other three provinces were urgently requested to send delegates.

Meanwhile the Administration of Lord Shelburne, after a very brief season of power, had collapsed in April, 1783, and been followed by the coalition Ministry of Lord North and Charles Fox. But it was not until the following June that Lord Northington, Lord Temple's successor, assumed the reins of government in Ireland. Shortly after his arrival the Irish Parliament was dissolved. The elections naturally created considerable excitement, and it was stated, apparently on good grounds, that in the new Parliament a third of the open constituencies found fresh representatives. The situation of the country called loudly for a retrenchment in the expenses of Government. The effects of two consecutive bad harvests, though some-

what minimised by an embargo which Parliament had laid on the export of corn, flour, and potatoes in November, 1782, had been most deplorable. By far the greater bulk of the peasantry had been reduced to the verge of starvation. And notwithstanding evident signs that the state of the country generally had greatly improved since the commercial concessions of 1779, these good results had been wholly neutralised by a proportionate increase in the expenses of Government. The revenue, it was said, had in the last two years increased more than £300,000; but the increase had been accompanied by an annual deficit of about £200,000, in addition to a national debt of nearly two millions. Accordingly, on October 28th, the subject was brought before Parliament by Sir Henry Cavendish, who moved that the condition of the country demanded every practicable retrenchment, consistent with its safety and an honourable support of Government. In the discussion that followed Flood argued in favour of a diminution in the military establishment. He was at once opposed by Grattan, who detected, or thought he detected, in the proposal a sinister design to increase the already overgrown power of the volunteers. He reminded Flood how in 1778 he had opposed a similar motion, and how he had voted the sending of 4,000 troops "to butcher our brethren in America." Nettled by this reference to events in his career, not over creditable to him, Flood launched out into a vehement attack on his rival, whom he stigmatised as a "mendicant patriot," and who, after having been bought by his country for £50,000, had immediately sold her for prompt payment. The galleries were undoubtedly with Flood, who was able, playful, sarcastic, and vehement. Grattan, feeling that he had lost the people, determined to justify his conduct, and at the

same time revenge himself to the full on Flood, whom he regarded as the chief offender in the recent agitation and the cause of his own unpopularity. Accordingly, after having explained his own conduct, he proceeded to assail Flood in the most virulent fashion. Not content with arraigning his public conduct and ascribing to him the most unworthy motives, he abused him for the defects of his person, the affectation of his manner, and the vanity of his egotism: called him a notorious cheat and perjurer, a man of bad character, a false patriot, a hypocrite, a traitor, and a coward, and ended by saying that he would tell him to his beard that he was not an honest man.

In malignant splendour and destructive violence his speech can only be compared to the eruption of a volcano, or the devastating sweep of a tornado. All the pent-up wrath which Flood's conduct on the Repeal question had engendered seemed to find in it a sudden and awful outlet. Yet withal so artfully was private malice blended with patriotic indignation; with such consummate skill was every feature of Flood's character distorted, and every shade that rested on his reputation darkened, that to his auditors it seemed rather a portrait that he was drawing than a caricature. Any other man but Flood would have been utterly overthrown by such a sudden manifestation of ruthless and terrific energy; but hardly had Grattan concluded than he rose to reply, and he was proceeding coolly to defend himself from the charges thus unsparingly heaped upon him when the Speaker thought it proper to interfere. The House supported the chair, and after a vain appeal to be heard Flood retired. A duel would no doubt have followed had not the House interposed its authority and ordered both parties into custody. It was a disgraceful scene, and one to which Grattan never liked to recur. Years afterwards he

paid a graceful tribute to Flood's memory, and always seems to have spoken highly of him in private. Flood, too, on his part, magnanimously occupied the chair at a volunteer meeting, when a vote of thanks to Grattan was passed. But the course of that evening's debate rendered any cordial reconciliation impossible. Words had been spoken on both sides which could be neither forgotten nor forgiven. For the nation, the consequences of the quarrel were most disastrous.

Shortly after this event and while Parliament was still sitting, there assembled in Dublin on November 10th, in accordance with the requisition put forth by the Dungannon conference, 160 delegates, many of them gentlemen of rank and fortune, representing the united volunteer force of the kingdom. Meeting at the Royal Exchange, they elected the Earl of Charlemont to preside over their assembly; but finding the place inconveniently small they adjourned to the Rotunda, being escorted thither by the Dublin volunteers, amid the acclamations of the populace. Hardly had they proceeded to business than a curious spectacle presented itself. Every delegate it seemed was anxious to reform Parliament on his own plan. Speculations the most crude, and proposals the most absurd, followed each other with bewildering rapidity. Every day fresh suggestions were propounded without any resolutions being arrived at; the Earl of Charlemont was utterly incapable of controlling the discussion, and the assembly would probably have dissolved in confusion had it not been for Flood, to whose authority the delegates eventually, on the motion of the Bishop of Derry, consented to resign themselves. After a prolonged discussion as to the limits of the proposed reform measures, especially as to the advisability of admitting the Roman Catholics to the franchise, a plan was ulti-

mately agreed upon, and on November 29th, Flood was deputed to introduce the subject to the notice of Parliament. This resolution was much reprobated by Lord Charlemont, who would have preferred that the Volunteer Bill should have been sent down to the different counties to be recommended by public meetings and petitions; but Flood would admit of no delay and his influence prevailed with the meeting.

Accordingly, that same evening, he, with several other members of the Convention, also members of Parliament, appeared in the House of Commons, dressed in the uniform of the volunteers, and asked leave to bring in his Reform Bill. The scope of the Bill was undoubtedly very moderate, and without experimenting on the frame of the Constitution would certainly have gone far to remove those glaring anomalies and abuses in the representation which were patent to all. It proposed to restrict the right of voting at elections, except in the case of those who possessed freehold or leasehold property of the annual value of £20, to men who had actually resided in the constituency six months out of the preceding twelve; to throw open decayed boroughs by extending their franchise to the neighbouring district; to annul, by Act of Parliament, the bye-laws, whereby many corporations claimed the privilege to restrict the right of franchise; to give votes to all Protestants resident in any city or borough who possessed freeholds or leaseholds of a specified value and duration; to incapacitate all who held pensions during pleasure from sitting in Parliament, and to require all who accepted a pension for life, or any place under the Crown, to vacate their seats and submit to a new election; to oblige all members to swear that they had not given money for their seats; and finally to limit the duration of Par-

liament to three years. The use of the ballot and the admission of the Catholics to the franchise were discussed, but dismissed as impracticable. It was, as was said at the time, an attempt to reform the Government and Constitution on Protestant principles, and still to preserve the Protestant ascendency.

Nevertheless, even had the origin of the Bill been less open to objection than it was, it was evident that it would meet with a strenuous resistance from those whose privileges were threatened by it. As a matter of fact the motion for leave to bring it in was immediately opposed by the Attorney-General, Yelverton, on the ground that it had originated with an armed body of men, and that it was an attempt to overawe Parliament. This was the general line of argument; but regular debate there was none. Never, in the opinion of one who was present on the occasion, did the House present a wilder and more tumultuous appearance than on this occasion. Northington, who had witnessed the assembling of the Convention with considerable apprehension, had exerted himself to the utmost to cause dissension between it and Parliament. His policy was completely successful. The House refused by an overwhelming majority to listen to Flood's proposal. Grattan, who was committed to the principle of the Bill, both spoke and voted in its favour; but his action was correctly gauged by the Lord-Lieutenant who wrote to Fox on the following day:

"Grattan, having pledged himself to the idea of reform of Parliament, could not see the distinction between the refusal of leave on the ground of its having come from an exceptionable body and the absolute denial of receiving any plan of reform. He voted against us and spoke; but his speech evidently showed that he meant us no harm, and on the question of the resolution to support Parliament, he voted with us."

That Parliament should have declined to entertain the

proposal was what might have been expected; but to me Grattan's conduct in the matter appears to have been both disingenuous and deplorable. True, he was now a Privy Councillor, and had promised to give a general support to Lord Northington's Government; but he was pledged to reform, and the fact that the Bill had originated with the volunteers was on his own admission no valid objection to it. "I love," he said, "to blend the idea of Parliament and the volunteers; they have hitherto concurred in establishing our Constitution in the last Parliament, and I hope they will do it in the present." Holding these opinions, then, it was surely his duty to have exerted himself to his utmost in support of Flood, and not merely to have endeavoured to save his reputation for consistency by lending to the motion such support as "meant no harm" to Government. The consequences of this culpable neutrality on his part were most disastrous, and completely nullified the effect of his former action. In criticising political action it is, of course, always dangerous to attribute motives; but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in this instance Grattan's conduct was, perhaps unconsciously to himself, prejudiced by his quarrel with Flood. The recent controversy over the Renunciation question culminating in their open quarrel, coupled with Grattan's evident anxiety, that agitation should cease and that the public mind should be tranquillised, appears to have blinded him to the vital necessity of a Parliamentary reform. Had he recognised this necessity; had he foreseen the "practical difficulties" which the measure would meet, and there was always a tendency on his part to under-estimate "practical difficulties," there can be no doubt whatever that he would have thrown himself heart and soul into the movement, and, even at the risk of a civil war, have forced Parliament to reform itself. The

best construction that we can place on his conduct is that he believed Parliament to have been more patriotic than it really was. That he made a profound mistake in not lending to the movement all the influence which his high reputation with the Government and Parliament gave him is to me a circumstance never to be sufficiently deplored. Never was a time more opportune for such a reform. Fox, liberal and enlightened, was in office; the volunteers were in their zenith; and the popular enthusiasm at its height. Parliament, it is true, might and probably would have resisted the demand for reform in any shape or form, or emanating from any quarter, but with the moral support of the volunteers there seems no reason to doubt that a scheme, which should have removed the more glaring anomalies of the representative system, could, with Grattan's support, have been forced through Parliament. Humanly speaking, it is not too much in my opinion to say that on Grattan's conduct, at this crisis, depended very largely the future of Ireland. Years afterwards, when the volunteers had lost their influence and sunk into insignificance; when the corruption of Parliament had grown more intense, and when Reform Bill after Reform Bill had been introduced by him only to be rejected by overwhelming and venal majorities, it is impossible not to think that he must have recalled his action at this time with some feeling of regret and self-reproach.

When the unceremonious rejection of their Bill was announced to the Convention by Flood, on the following day, there was some slight ebullition of feeling, which was promptly suppressed by Lord Charlemont, and after passing an Address to his Majesty expressive of the loyalty of the volunteers to the Crown, the assembly, from which so much had been expected and so much apprehended, quietly dissolved on December 2nd. The collapse of the Con-

vention was a deplorable disaster. Though reform still continued to be agitated, the force which alone could have given effect to it, had ceased to exist. Masters of the field, the two Houses of Parliament resumed their independence and gave exercise to it by sundry appropriate resolutions and addresses. From universally acknowledged benefactors and saviours of their country, a few words would have sufficed to have converted the volunteers into traitors. By the general body of reformers the tame surrender of the Convention was viewed with shame and sorrow, and December 2nd was long remembered in the north as a day of humiliation and reproach.

As for Grattan, his conduct cost him the friendship of the Earl of Charlemont. On the accession of Fox to office, both he and Charlemont had consented to become Privy Councillors, stipulating only that while being consulted they should not be "considered," and should be perfectly free to alter their attitude towards Government should the occasion in their opinion require it. Nothing occurred to interrupt the friendly relations thus established until the question of the reduction of the army estimates arose, when Charlemont found himself in opposition both to Grattan and the Government. Anxious as he was that Ireland should not appear to be ungrateful to England for her generous concessions of free trade and legislative independence; desirous as he was to knit the two kingdoms together by a bond of mutual affection and a common interest, Grattan had objected to any reduction which might be construed as a selfish disregard for the interests of the Empire at large. The army might be costly, it might be a burden too heavy for the nation, but in his opinion it was better that the nation should for a time suffer pecuniarily, or that retrenchment should be looked for in some other direction than that she should lay herself open

to the charge of ingratitude. Charlemont thought otherwise. He agreed with Flood that the military expenses far exceeded the resources of the kingdom. He was irritated and pained at Grattan's conduct, which seemed to him a grave dereliction of duty. His visits to the Council Chamber became less and less frequent till they finally ceased altogether. The prominent part which he played at the Convention and the neutrality of Grattan tended still further to widen the breach between them. To Grattan, sitting as he did for the borough of Charlemont, the situation was most embarrassing, and in order, as he thought, to act honourably by his old patron, he purchased the borough of Longford for a son of Sir Annesley Stewart, a friend and relation of Lord Charlemont. This, instead of propitiating the Earl, was regarded by him as manifesting "a fixed and settled design," on the part of Grattan, to break his connection with him, and in a letter, which can only be described as silly, he charged him with gross ingratitude. Grattan's reply in explanation of his own political conduct was frank and manly. He deplored Charlemont's determination to put an end to their intercourse. "However," he added, "it is certainly what you can do; but you can do no more—you cannot diminish the opinion, regard, and love, which I retain for your lordship in the highest degree." Thus abruptly and most unhappily terminated a friendship, which had been a source of unqualified pleasure to both parties. After the rupture they still continued to act together for the public good, particularly after the establishment of the Whig Club; but it was only after Charlemont's death, on the eve of the Union, that Lady Charlemont and her family again visited Tinnehinch on terms of ancient and renewed friendship.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSTITUTIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

1784-1789.

Commercial depression—Distress in Dublin—Demand for Protection—Pitt's commercial scheme—Passes the Irish Parliament—Modified in England—Rejected in Ireland—Origin of the Tithes grievance—Agrarian outrage—Coercion Bill—Grattan proposes a commutation or modification of Tithes—Opposition of the clergy—Rejected by Parliament—Insanity of George III.—Regency Bill—Irish Parliament proceeds by way of Address—Recovery of the King—Measures of reprisal.

HOWEVER we choose to account for it, there is, perhaps, no feature in modern Irish history more striking than the apparent insufficiency and failure of almost every remedial measure, whether emanating from the English or Irish Parliament, to give complete and final satisfaction to Ireland. No matter how honestly that legislation may have been intended, no matter with what degree of satisfaction it may have been at the time received, the result has always proved it to have been incomplete and inadequate. So it was in the case of the repeal legislation, which was almost immediately followed by a demand for an unequivocal renunciation. So also was it in the case of the commercial legislation of 1779, which at the time was hailed with so much joy by the Irish as the panacea for all their grievances. Notwithstanding the very liberal concessions of Lord North's Administration,

which had given to Ireland the right to trade with the English colonies on the sole condition of establishing the same duties and regulations as those to which English trade with the plantations was subject; notwithstanding also the right conferred on Ireland, by the acknowledgment of her legislative independence, of entering into commercial treaties with foreign nations, the trade and manufactures of Ireland continued in a languishing condition. The privilege of importing English goods into Ireland, either freely or at low duties, gave, it was said, the English manufacturers, with their vast accumulated capital and their highly perfected machinery, an unfair advantage over Irish manufacturers, and enabled them to beat them even in their own markets. Hence there soon arose a demand for protection.

Early in 1784 the state of the woollen manufacturers was brought very prominently and very ably before Parliament by a Mr. Gardiner, one of the members for Dublin. The poverty and wretchedness of the manufacturers of Dublin was, he declared, so indisputable that he deemed it unnecessary to enter into any detail on that subject. Honourable members needed only to go into the streets and warehouses of the city to convince themselves of it. But the distress was by no means confined to Dublin. It extended to every other manufacturing town in the kingdom—to Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. Nor was it merely the woollen manufacture that was suffering from English competition; every infant industry was in a similar condition. The only natural remedy for the depression was the establishment of a light duty on foreign goods, just sufficient to place Irish manufacturers on a level with their English competitors. In doing this Parliament could not offend England; for it was by means of protection that England had risen to her present

position in power and wealth. What was good for one nation was surely good for another. He concluded by moving four propositions, to which he asked the assent of the House, viz., that the working manufacturers of Ireland were steeped in the greatest poverty, that the importation of foreign goods had considerably increased of late years and still continued to increase, that the importation was the cause of the distress, and that it could only be removed through the intervention of Parliament. The House, however, declined to entertain the proposal, mainly on the ground that the distress was greatly exaggerated, and that protection might be construed into an act of hostility towards England.

But, though perhaps exaggerated, the fact of the distress was undeniable. There had been a bad harvest in the preceding year, and in the beginning of 1784 a proclamation had been issued forbidding the exportation of oats, oatmeal and barley. Notwithstanding this, food had risen in some parts of the country almost to famine prices. Non-importation agreements again became the order of the day. During the summer the streets of Dublin were thronged by crowds of unemployed mechanics, one of whose favourite devices was to tar and feather those who dealt in imported goods, or whom they regarded as otherwise being their enemies. On August 15th, the Lord Lieutenant informed the Home Government that the city was in a great measure under the dominion and tyranny of the mob. He was anxious to take immediate and vigorous measures of repression, but Pitt, who had succeeded to the head of affairs after the dismissal of the North and Fox Coalition Ministry in December, 1783, was of opinion that merely repressive measures would only aggravate the evil. He was anxious to appease the legitimate distress of the country, and

thought that it could best be done by an extension of the commercial concessions of 1779. His view of the situation was broad and generous, as became a disciple of Adam Smith. In order, accordingly, to assist him in formulating such a scheme as might be consonant with Irish feeling, he summoned over for consultation the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. John Foster, and the Chief Commissioner of the Revenue, Mr. John Beresford. During the autumn and winter he held frequent conferences with these gentlemen, and with Mr. Orde, the Irish Secretary. The result of their deliberations was communicated by him to Rutland on January 6th, 1785, in a long and weighty letter.

"By the additions now proposed to former concessions," he wrote, "we open to Ireland the chance of a competition with ourselves on terms of more than equality, and we give her advantages which make it impossible she should ever have anything to fear from the jealousy or restrictive policy of this country in future. Such an arrangement is defensible only on the idea of relinquishing local prejudices and partial advantages, in order to consult uniformly and without distinction the general benefit of the empire. This cannot be done but by making England and Ireland one country in effect, though for local concerns under distinct legislatures; one in the communication of advantages, and of course in the participation of burdens. If their unity is broken or rendered absolutely precarious in either of these points, the system is defective, and there is an end of the whole."

The plan, which was embodied in ten propositions, was laid before the Irish Parliament on February 7th, by Secretary Orde. By it, it was proposed that all foreign and colonial goods should pass from England to Ireland and from Ireland to England without any increase of duty; that all Irish goods should be imported into England and all English goods into Ireland either freely or at duties which were the same in each country; that where the duties in the two countries were unequal

they should be equalized by reducing the higher duty to the level of the lower; that, except in a few carefully specified cases, there should be no duties on importation, or bounties on exportation; that each country should give a preference in its markets to the goods of the other, over the same goods imported from abroad, and that whenever the hereditary revenue exceeded a sum which remained to be fixed, the surplus should be appropriated towards the support of the naval forces of the Empire, in such manner as the Irish Parliament might think desirable.

To a scheme so fair it seemed impossible that any real objection could be taken. But the proposal to appropriate the surplus revenue roused the suspicions of the Irish Parliament. It was tantamount, it was said, to the exaction of an annual tribute by the English Parliament, and as such ought to be sturdily resisted by those who had any regard for the independence of their country. Even Grattan, who regarded the scheme with favour, disliked the clause, not only on this ground, but because it was indefinite in amount and might rise with the prosperity of the country to a wholly inordinate sum, and also because it seemed to open a door for ministerial extravagance in raising loans, a practice which he regarded as highly ruinous to the country. He therefore gave the Secretary to understand, that unless the expenses of the Government were made equal to the revenue he would use all the influence he possessed to oppose the scheme. He declared he would state his opinion in Parliament with such arguments as he was convinced would render it impossible for any honest man, who pretended to the slightest regard to his country, to support the measure. The Government, who were anxious to conciliate his favour and obtain his support, because, as Rutland

candidly wrote to Lord Sidney, they were not unacquainted with Mr. Grattan's character, and experience had shown to what effect he could use his abilities when a strong ground of popularity was given him, accordingly added another resolution which made the contribution to the support of the imperial navy contingent in time of peace upon the establishment of a balance between revenue and expenditure. The hereditary revenue was now £652,000, and was steadily rising. The new resolution provided that whatever surplus it produced above the sum of £656,000 in each year of peace, wherein the annual revenue should equal the annual expense, and in each year of war, without regard to any such equality, should be appropriated towards the support of the naval force of the Empire, in such manner as the Parliament of Ireland should direct.

Thus amended, the scheme met with Grattan's entire approval and support. No doubt he believed that it would have been wiser on the part of the English Minister to have trusted wholly to the generosity of the Irish Parliament; but there was nothing in the scheme that could offend the most ardent patriot, while on the other hand it tended to bind together the two nations in the closest of all unions, that of identity of interests. The plan, Grattan declared, was open, fair, and just, and such as the British Minister could justify to both nations. The conduct of the Government had, he admitted, exhibited a degree of candour, integrity, and honest patriotism, extremely to its honour. Though violently opposed by Flood, who had placed himself at the head of the protectionist party, and who ridiculed it as a fraud practised on the generous credulity of the Irish people, and a covert attack on their constitutional liberty, the measure passed through the Irish Parliament without much difficulty. Trusting to

the honesty of Pitt and his ability to carry the resolutions in the English Parliament, the House of Commons voted fresh taxes to the amount of £140,000, in order that the surplus of the hereditary revenue might at once be handed over to Great Britain. It was on this occasion that FitzGibbon, afterwards Earl of Clare, remarked that, if the Parliament of Great Britain rejected the adjustment to which the Irish Parliament had agreed, it would lay a just foundation for jealousy and complaint. Indeed, there seems at the time to have been no suspicion that the scheme would be so rejected, though some members ventured to hint that it would be more prudent to postpone the new taxes until it had been ratified by England.

On February 22nd, the resolutions were laid before the English Parliament by Pitt in a speech of remarkable power and eloquence. The measure, he declared, was one that sat very near to his heart. The establishment of a close and permanent union between the two countries was an object, the most important, he thought, that was ever likely to engage his attention as a statesman. But it is not necessary for our purpose to trace with any degree of minuteness the history of the debate in the English House of Commons. It is sufficient to say that the determined and, it must be confessed, factious opposition of Fox and the Whig party, backed by the noisy and selfish protests of the manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire, ultimately obliged Pitt to withdraw the measure for amendment. When he again submitted the resolutions on May 12th it was found that they had grown from eleven to twenty. Some of these related to patents, copyright in books, the right of fishing upon the coasts of the British dominions, and attracted little attention. But by the others many of the more important concessions too

Ireland were so modified and restricted as to be hardly recognisable. It was stipulated that all the navigation laws that were then in force in England, or that might afterwards be made by the British Parliament, should, without delay or modification, be adopted by the Irish Parliament; that Ireland should import no goods from the West Indies, except the products of the English colonies; and that, so long as the Charter of the East India Company existed, Ireland should be debarred from all trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. Even in their modified form the proposals were strenuously resisted by Fox and Sheridan. But the ground of their opposition had been shifted. It was no longer that the measure went merely to damage the trade of England, but that it was an insidious attack on the Irish Constitution. "I will not," said Fox, appealing to the jealous fears of the Irish Parliament, "barter English commerce for Irish slavery; that is not the price I would pay, nor is this the thing I would purchase." We have already had occasion to note what importance was attached to English opinion in Ireland, and it is clear that Fox, who had abandoned all hope of defeating the measure in the English House of Commons, was directing his efforts to make it repugnant to the Irish in the expectation that when it again came before them they would indignantly reject it.

Nor was he disappointed. When the news of the amended propositions and the criticisms of Fox upon them reached Ireland, popular indignation ran very high against Pitt, on whom the whole onus of the recent failure was laid. Nor was the feeling less bitter amongst those members of Parliament who had given their cordial support to the former proposals. The Lord Lieutenant sounded Grattan, but found him on this point "utterly

impracticable." On August 12th, when the new resolutions were brought before Parliament, he rose to offer them the most uncompromising opposition. Briefly referring to the commercial legislation of the last few years, he said the measures of 1779 and 1782 had by some been deemed insufficient, because they had left the channel trade, or the intercourse between England and Ireland, unregulated.

"A successful political campaign, an unsuccessful harvest, the poverty of not a few, together with the example of England, brought forward in the year 1783 a number of famishing manufacturers with a demand for protecting duties. The extent of their demand was idle, the manner of conveying that demand tumultuary, but not being wholly resisted, nor yet adequately assisted, they laid the foundation of another plan, which made its appearance in 1785, opposite indeed to their wishes and fatal to their expectations. This was the system of Reciprocity—a system fair in its principle, and in process of time likely to be beneficial, though not likely to be of any great present advantage other than by stopping the growth of demand, allaying a commercial fever, and producing settlement and incorporation with the people of England."

That plan, however, had been rejected by the English Parliament, and in its place Ministers had substituted another. But this new plan was very unlike the former; for it did not stop with considerations of trade, but trenched upon another subject—one very dear to all Irishmen, and on which they ought to be inexorable—viz., the Constitution. In that question the idea of protecting duties, of countervailing duties, of reciprocal duties, vanished, and the energies of every heart, and the prudence of every head were called upon to shield the nation and to defend her newly acquired liberties. To this scheme he gave a most decided negative, and in justification pleaded the faith of England and the sanctity of previous settlements. However, lest certain glosses should seem to go unanswered, he proceeded to consider

the propositions in detail, and to show how they not only went to undermine the Constitution of 1782, but also to deprive them of the benefits of the commercial legislation of 1779. For such a sacrifice he had neither ears, nor eyes, nor any other function. "What!" he exclaimed, "surrender that free trade, for which we exerted every nerve in 1779; that free Constitution, for which we pledged life and fortune in 1782! Our lives are at the service of the Empire, but our liberties—No; we received them from our Father which is in Heaven, and we will hand them down to our children." "I do not want," he said, re-echoing Fox's cry, "to make an experiment on the British market by making an experiment likewise on the Constitution and spirit of the people of Ireland." He reminded the House of the great privileges in regard to trade that they already possessed. The great battle had been won; the question of the home market was, after all, a subsidiary one. In time the commercial fever which had been artificially raised would subside. Meanwhile they could go on; they had a growing prosperity, and were as yet exempted from intolerable taxes; they could regulate their own commerce, cherish their own manufactures, keep down their taxes, and brood over the increasing prosperity of young Ireland. But of all things it was necessary to preserve their constitutional liberties.

"If the genius of old England came to the bar of that House with the British Constitution in one hand, and in the other an offer of all that England retains, or all that she has lost, of commerce, I should turn my back on the latter, and pay my obeisance to the blessings of her Constitution; for that Constitution will give you commerce, and it was the loss of that Constitution that deprived you of commerce."

They had made two great efforts; they had won free trade and a free Constitution.

"Make," he cried, "your third great effort—preserve them, and with them preserve unaltered your own calm sense of public right, the dignity of Parliament, the majesty of the people, and the powers of the island! Keep them unsullied, uncovenanted, uncircumscribed, and unstipendiary! These paths are the paths to glory, and, let me add, these ways are the ways of peace. So shall the prosperity of your country, though without a tongue to thank you, yet laden with the blessings of constitution and of commerce, bear attestation to your services, and wait on your progress with involuntary praise!"

Despite some exaggeration, natural perhaps under the circumstances, the speech was a very great one, and made a profound effect not only on the House, but on the country at large. "Mr. Grattan," said one of the journals of the day, "by his late noble conduct in standing forth again the champion of his injured country has revived the drooping laurels that once crowned his fame, and raised a monument in the hearts of his fellow-subjects that no time will destroy, but which may justly be called *aere perennius*." Similar testimony came from an opposite quarter. "The speech of Mr. Grattan," wrote the Lord Lieutenant, "was, I understand, a display of the most beautiful eloquence perhaps ever heard, but it was seditious and inflammatory to a degree hardly credible." The victory of the Opposition was complete, or, as Curran graphically put it, the siege that was drawn round the Constitution was raised and the enemy was gone. Despite the utmost exertions of Government, it was only by the narrow majority of nineteen that leave to bring in the Bill was granted. In justification of himself, Secretary Orde printed the Bill and had it distributed; but it was fully understood that nothing more would be heard of it. The news of its abandonment was hailed with general satisfaction, and that night Dublin was illuminated.

However much we may deplore the rejection of the

amended propositions by the Irish Parliament, we cannot but admit that their conduct under the circumstances was only natural. Whatever blame attaches to their rejection lies at the door of the English Opposition. It was not the first nor the last time that Irish interests have been sacrificed to suit party purposes. Nevertheless, the popular indignation against Pitt was not altogether without foundation. However we regard the transaction, it must, I think, be allowed that it was sadly mismanaged. It may, of course, be said that in face of the determined opposition of the English manufacturers Pitt had no option but to withdraw the original eleven resolutions and to modify them; but assurances had been given to the Irish Parliament; the word of the Government had been pledged, and, so far as Ireland was concerned, the contract had been sealed by the grant of the new taxes. That these assurances ought not to have been given unless Pitt was prepared to stand or fall by the eleven resolutions appears to me indisputable. Their rejection under the circumstances, as FitzGibbon, than whom the Government had no warmer supporter in Ireland, admitted, furnished a just foundation for jealousy and complaint. In fact, the ultimate issue of the negotiations was, so far as Ireland was concerned, most deplorable. Even admitting that the concessions contained in the amended propositions were very trivial, it would have been better for Ireland had she accepted them. Not because there was any great constitutional question involved in their rejection, as it has pleased certain writers to represent, but because the rejection of them tended to foster jealousies between Pitt and the Irish Parliament. The scheme was one on which Pitt had set his heart, and its rejection greatly irritated him. Taken in connection with its conduct on the Regency question, to which we

shall presently advert, it tended to depreciate the Irish Parliament in his opinion, and to incline him to the adoption of more forcible methods for the maintenance of that union between the two countries which it had been the great object of his commercial legislation to promote, and which he was gradually becoming more and more convinced was imperilled by the legislative settlement of 1782. Its effect on the Irish Parliament, or rather on Grattan and his friends, was equally baneful. It raised suspicions in their minds, which subsequent events only served to confirm, as to the honesty of Pitt, and, curious though it may appear, threw them into the arms of Fox, thereby giving good grounds for the assertion that they had degenerated into a mere tail of the English Opposition.

Before entering upon a consideration of the Regency question it will be advisable to direct our attention to a subject which, at this time, greatly exercised Grattan, and which so far as the internal prosperity of the kingdom was concerned, was of paramount importance for Ireland. I refer to the subject of tithes.

In Ireland the conversion of large tracts of arable land into pasturage during the first years of the 18th century had been attended with results similar to those so graphically described by Bishop Latimer, as having occurred in England after a similar transformation about the beginning of the 16th century. Deprived of their manufactures by English legislation and debarred from entering the learned professions by the enactments of the penal code, the bulk of the Irish people found themselves thrown almost wholly upon the soil for their subsistance. Absenteeism, with its attendant evils—the middle-man and the tithe proctor, aggravated the situation and rendered the position of the peasantry one

of simple and unalloyed misery. An outburst, or rather series of outbursts of agrarian crime about the middle of the century was followed by strong coercive measures on the part of the Irish Parliament. Though at first limited to two years, the Whiteboy Act of 1765 was found to have so greatly contributed to the peace and quiet of the kingdom that it was renewed, and ten years later made more stringent by the addition of clauses rendering it criminal to send threatening letters, to compel men to quit their farms or to conceal Whiteboys. As was natural these severely repressive measures were only partially successful, and the peace of the country continued to suffer from periodical outbursts of crime.

Towards the close of 1786, there were some slight symptoms of a fresh outbreak in Munster. The fact was noticed in the Speech from the Throne on the reassembling of Parliament in January, 1787, and it was hinted that severer measures were necessary for its suppression. When pressed by the Opposition, who took exception to the conduct of the Government in the matter, the Attorney-General, FitzGibbon, was obliged to admit that the condition of the peasantry in that province was wretched beyond description. Far from being able to pay their tithes, he said they had neither food nor raiment for themselves. Nevertheless, Government felt obliged to ask Parliament for extraordinary powers to suppress the rioters. Accordingly, on February 13th, FitzGibbon introduced a most stringent Coercion Bill for the prevention of tumultuous risings. Except by one or two members, who disputed the representations of Government in the matter, the necessity for coercion was generally admitted. The Bill, however, in the opinion of Grattan and the party he led, was excessively severe, and they exerted themselves to obtain a modification of some

of its more obnoxious provisions. He agreed, he said, that the south should be coerced. If the population or peasantry of Munster had thought proper to invade personal property and lay the foundation of undermining their own liberties; if they had resorted to the exercise of torture as relief for poverty, he lamented their savage infatuation and consented to their punishment. But he objected to the severity of the Bill, which, like the Draconian laws, had blood and felony in every sentence of it. Particularly obnoxious did he deem the clause which empowered magistrates to demolish any Roman Catholic Chapel, at which tumultuous assemblies were held, or where unlawful oaths had been administered. It seemed to him like a revival of the most dangerous and exceptional part of the penal code. Nor did he like the principle of perpetuity in the Bill. "Would any man say," he asked, "that the coercion which might be necessary for the turbulence of one period would be requisite at all future times? Was it to be handed down as an inheritance to posterity? Was it to descend from the fathers to the children as a kind of original sin, and death and felony to be spread in every quarter?" Modified in one or two particulars the Bill speedily became law.

But the inadequacy of coercive measures alone had been deeply impressed on Grattan's mind, especially since the startling admission of the Attorney-General as to the poverty-stricken condition of the peasantry in the south of Ireland, and, accordingly, without loss of time, he, on March 13th, asked leave to bring in a Bill for a modification of the tithe system, against which the complaints of the peasantry were chiefly directed. The House of Commons, he said, in bringing the subject before them, had condemned the violence of the peasantry and had

made provision for its punishment, but they had done more—they had admitted the fact of their distress. It behoved them to take some measure to alleviate it. The Bill which he had the honour to lay before them proposed to remedy in some of its objectionable features the existing system of supporting the clergy. In the south of Ireland that system went directly against the first principle of human existence; for in the south potatoes were tithed. It was said, on indisputable evidence, that the peasant of Munster often paid £7 an acre for land, that the price of his labour was sixpence a-day, and that he paid from eight to twelve shillings as tithe. In Connaught potatoes did not pay tithe. In the north a moderate *modus* existed. The consequence was that while peace prevailed in the north and west, in the south there were perpetual disturbances. Of course he admitted there were other grievances, but he failed to see why a most heavy tithe should be added to a high rent and a low price of labour. Another objection to the system was that it exempted the wealthy grazier and threw the parson on labour and poverty for his maintenance. The system besides was unfair to the clergy. It made the pastor of the people a spy on the husbandman, and reduced him to the position of an annual teazing contractor and litigant with a flock among whom he was placed to extend religion by his personal popularity. Hence the tithe agent, who no doubt relieved him in certain respects, but involved him in new odium and new disputes. The result was that while the peasant often paid more than a tenth, the clergyman seldom received more than a thirteenth. A commutation of tithes was said to be an impossibility. But was it? Was the discovery of the income of the Church an impenetrable mystery? Was it impossible to give the same income

under different regulations? Or, if a commutation was out of the power of human capacity, was it impossible to establish a *modus* such as obtained in the north? Believing that it was quite possible, he begged to move:

"That, if it shall appear, at the commencement of the next session of Parliament that public tranquillity had been restored in those parts of the kingdom that had lately been disturbed, and due obedience paid to the laws, this House will take into consideration the subject of tithes, and endeavour to form some plan for the honourable support of the clergy and the ease of the people."

The proposal, calculated in itself to appease the disturbances, was a just one, and as commendable to Grattan's head as to his heart. It was, moreover, quite in accordance with Pitt's views on the subject, and would certainly have proved acceptable to many liberal-minded clergymen. But it was at once opposed by Government. Their conduct was sharply resented by Grattan. "He could have wished," he said, "that Government had not taken any part in the business. He could not see what an English Cabinet or an Irish Secretary had to do with it. The gentlemen of the country knew best their own situation, and it should have been left to them." The motion was rejected without a division.

But having undertaken a task, which he considered incumbent upon him, he was not to be thus easily daunted. He continued to seek for information from all quarters, especially from France and Scotland, as to how it was possible to provide for the parochial clergy, and on February 14th, 1788, he again brought the subject before Parliament, when he argued for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the grievances of the peasantry of Munster. He understood, he said, that everything of any consequence that was tithed in Ireland was tithed in Munster; that in some of the distressed parishes wheat,

potatoes, barley, bere, rye, flax, hemp, sheep, lambs, milch cows, turf, pigs, apples, peaches, bees, cabbage, oziers, and in some even oblations, Easter-offerings, and burial-money paid tithe. He had seen a catalogue of some of the tithe-proctor's charges: so much for potatoes, so much for wheat, so much for oats, so much for hay—all exorbitant, and, after a long list of unconscionable demands for the parson, came in a peculation for the proctor; two shillings in the pound for proctorage, *i.e.*, for making a charge, for whose excess and exorbitance the proctor ought to have been not paid but punished. All this and much more he was prepared to prove before the committee. The state of the agricultural labourer in the disturbed districts, he averred, was most heartrending. In those parts the price of labour was not more than five-pence a-day, which, deducting one-sixth for broken weather, sickness, and other causes, amounted to not more than five pounds a-year. Five pounds a-year and the small earnings his wife made by spinning was all the capital he had on which to support his family, pay his rent and hearth money, and in some cases of illegal exaction smoke money to the parson. When a gentleman of the Church of Ireland came to a peasant so circumstanced and demanded twelve or sixteen shillings an acre for tithe of potatoes, he demanded a child's provision, he exacted contribution from a pauper, he gleaned from wretchedness, he leased from penury, he fattened on hunger, raggedness, and destitution. Such a man making such a demand might have many good qualities, he admitted; he might be a good theologian, an excellent controversialist, deeply read in church history, very accurate in the value of church benefices, an excellent high priest, but he was not a Christian pastor. He was not the idea of a Christian minister. The Whiteboy was

the least of his foes. His great enemy was the precept of the Gospel and the example of the Apostles. A system which entailed such suffering and such crime did not proceed on the true principles of legislation. If they could not take the burden off the peasant's back, let them make that burden as light as possible, let them exempt the peasant's cow and garden from tithe. If they could not make him rich, let them do the next best thing in their power; let them consider his poverty as sacred; and vindicate against an extortioner the hallowed circle of his little boundary. "Human laws may make alterations, and when made must be observed; but it should be the policy of human laws to follow the wisdom of the laws of nature." But it was argued that tithes were more respectable and superior to any other kind of property. "The high priest will not take a Parliamentary title." Thereupon Grattan entered into an elaborate sketch of the origin and history of tithes, which he thus concluded:—

"I have shown you that tithe was a charity, subject to the support of the poor in the first place, and the priest in the last. I have shown you that tithe does not stand on the delicate ground of private property. I have shown you that it was a trust, converted into property by abuse; which abuse the Legislature may control without sacrilege or robbery. If a right to the full tenth is yet insisted on, give them the full tenth on the principles on which alone they at first ventured to demand it—subject to a poor rate. Let the trust be executed: let the widows and orphans share it: let the house of industry and the various hospitals and infirmaries share it. Let the house of God (now an hovel repaired at the expense of Parliament, though by the canon law it should be repaired by the priesthood) share it. If the clergy will insist on taking the full tithes of his potatoes, if they take the staff out of his hands, they must carry the peasant on their shoulders."

But the objection of impracticability against a commutation was only a pretence, and against a *modus* not even a pretence. As for the cry of innovation that had been

raised against it, he could only say that the Statutes of Mortmain were innovations, the suppression of the monasteries an innovation, the Reformation itself an innovation. In conclusion, he appealed to the justice, the humanity, and enlightenment of Parliament to redress the grievances of the peasantry. They had passed severe measures of coercion against them, he begged them to put in motion that great engine of government they possessed—the engine of redress. That and that only was government worthy their ambition.

Perhaps from the fact that it was better reported than most, this speech has always appeared to me the most powerful that Grattan ever delivered. Even the Attorney-General declared that it was the most splendid display of elocution the House had ever heard. "When," said a spectator, "he came to reason on the subject like a statesman, a philosopher, and a Christian, the House was amazed at the blaze of eloquence with which he lighted up the subject." He spoke for three hours; but at the end of the debate his motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority.

Disappointed but not discouraged, Grattan two months later brought the subject again before the House of Commons in a modified form, proposing that lands which had recently been or were in the future reclaimed, should for a certain time be exempt from tithe; that the partial or complete exemption of potatoes and linen from tithe, which existed in some parts of the country, should be extended to the whole; and that in order to oblige clergymen to reside in their parishes, a moderate tax on non-residence should be imposed. To the proposal in regard to barren lands Government declared they had no objection. This was the only concession he could obtain, and although it was for some years rejected on account

of the opposition of the clergy, it was ultimately carried. Indeed, by his repeated attacks on the tithe system, Grattan had greatly exasperated the clergy, who published a manifesto in answer to his great speech of February 14th, 1788, denying his statements as to the charges for tithes in Munster, asserting the moderation of the clergy in that province, and appealing to the noblemen and gentlemen of their respective dioceses against his speech, which they complained had cast a stigma on the whole body of the clergy, and had greatly injured the character of the Established Church. To this document Grattan replied in the House on May 8th, 1789. The advocates of tithes and their abuse, he said, having declined a public inquiry, had thought they best consulted the dignity of the Church by resorting to a paper war. He had been accused of making an attack on the Protestant clergy of the South, of a design to pull down the Protestant establishment on behalf of the Roman Catholics, of being an infidel and an enemy to all religion. They knew how totally unfounded such charges were. The clergy had said the charges against them were false. Let them prove them to be so. He was prepared to meet them on that ground, and again proposed a public inquiry. "Once more I offer it, and I add that if this Bill should pass and commissioners should be appointed, the clergy will be made sensible that we are friends to the provision of the Church as well as to the relief of the people." But it was of no avail; the proposal was negatived without a division.

Thus ended Grattan's desperate attempt at a peaceable settlement of this important question. It was not till fifty years afterwards that his wishes were realised by the Tithe Commutation Bill of Lord John Russell. With the exception, perhaps, of his exertions on behalf of

Roman Catholic emancipation, there is, however, no action of his life which reflects greater credit upon him than his ill-fated efforts to reconcile the interests of the Establishment with those of the peasantry. By none was his failure more regretted afterwards, as he himself predicted, than by the clergy themselves. In time the mists that clouded their vision were removed, and they learned to recognise in Grattan their best and their wisest friend. But it was then too late: the mischief had already been done: the firebrand of religious bigotry had divided Ireland into two hostile camps, and left her the victim of intestine discord.

In endeavouring to give a connected account of this important episode in Grattan's career, we have been led to anticipate somewhat the course of events, and it is now necessary to return to the autumn of 1788, when ill-health compelled him to visit Matlock in Derbyshire for the sake of its mineral waters. From Matlock he proceeded to Bath, and it was while staying at Bath that the rumour of the terrible calamity that had befallen George III. first reached him. Early in the summer the King's health had suffered severely from repeated bilious attacks. His attendants were greatly alarmed and surprised at the change that came over him—so suddenly had he grown old. His manner was very strange, and a rumour got abroad that his illness had affected his intellect. The rumour reached the King's ears, and on October 24th, in order, as he wrote to Pitt, "to stop further lies and any fall of the stocks," he determined to hold a *levée* at St. James's; but his conduct at it appeared so strange that it only tended to confirm the suspicion of his madness. On November 6th it was impossible any longer to doubt the fact of his insanity.

By no one was the situation more keenly felt than by

Pitt. It was not merely that he foresaw the establishment of the Prince of Wales as Regent and his own dismissal from office. That, of course, seemed to him inevitable. But the cordial and even intimate terms on which he had stood towards his afflicted sovereign gave to the situation a personal tinge and a poignancy which it had otherwise wanted. This fact ought to be steadily borne in mind when considering the great struggle for power that now ensued between him and Fox. It was not that that struggle was on his part a purely disinterested one. That I do not believe. Pitt was quite as ambitious as was Fox, and quite as ready to take advantage of any circumstance that would tend to his own aggrandisement as was his rival. But in fighting for himself Pitt was also, and quite as sincerely, fighting for his sovereign. It was this that gave him his advantage, and raised him to an unique position in the estimation of the nation. His mind was soon made up. The Prince of Wales must necessarily be appointed Regent during his father's illness, but it must be with such restrictions as should leave the situation materially unaffected, and enable the King to resume his place without difficulty on his restoration to health, an event which Pitt sanguinely expected.

Meanwhile, a special express was sent to recall Fox, who was at the time travelling in Italy. But, notwithstanding his utmost exertions, it was not till November 24th that he arrived in England. Fortunately it is not necessary for our purpose to describe minutely the course of the debate in the House of Commons, which was closely watched by Grattan from his seat beneath the gallery. The case of the Whigs was terribly mismanaged by Fox, while the violent conduct of Sheridan and Burke alienated the sympathy of the general public. Very early during the debate Fox raised the question of the right of the

Prince of Wales to assume the reins of power. The question was really immaterial; for both parties were agreed that the only possible Regent was the Prince of Wales. But it gave an overwhelming advantage to Pitt and placed in his hands a weapon which he used with consummate skill against his rival. He utterly denied Fox's statement: the Prince of Wales had, in his opinion, no inherent right to be made Regent. This opened up a fierce and prolonged discussion, with an appeal to precedent, which of course was just what Pitt desired. It enabled him to procrastinate, and procrastinate on the most popular grounds. "Pitt for the people and Fox for the prerogative of the Crown," was the cry that went forth to the people. Every day the debate lasted increased the influence and popularity of Pitt, and damaged the reputation of Fox. Though the condition of the King seemed hopeless, this delay proved invaluable to Pitt. On December 30th, 1788, he intimated to the Prince of Wales that it was his intention to bring in a Bill to empower His Royal Highness to exercise the royal authority in the name, and on behalf of His Majesty during His Majesty's illness, with certain limitations in regard to the care of the King's person, the management of the royal household, and the granting of peerages, pensions, and the like; adding that these limitations had been framed on the supposition that the King's illness was only temporary.

But it was not till February 13th that the Regency Bill finally passed through the House of Commons, and by that time a marked alteration for the better had taken place in the condition of the King. Shortly afterwards the usual bulletins were discontinued, and, on March 10th, it was publicly announced that the King had resumed his authority.

In Ireland, meanwhile, Parliament had reassembled on February 5th, and, on the 11th, Government declared that it was their intention to follow, as closely as the circumstances of the two countries would allow, the method pursued by the Government in England and to bring in a Bill to appoint the Prince of Wales Regent of the kingdom, with all "necessary" rights and prerogatives during the incapacity of the sovereign. The proposal was immediately opposed by Grattan. He objected, he said, to the interference of Government in a matter in which it behoved the Lords and Commons of Ireland and not the Castle to take the leading part. He dissented also from the method of procedure proposed. He submitted that it was proper for the House to begin by a resolution declaring the incapacity of the King, for the time being, to discharge the personal functions of the regal power. Having ascertained that, it was incumbent upon them to supply the deficiency, and the method he proposed was that of Address to His Royal Highness praying him to assume the Regency with full and undiminished regal authority. There were, he declared, two methods of procedure familiar to Parliament—that of Legislation and that of Address. When they proceeded by way of Legislation it was on the supposition of a third estate in a capacity to act; but Address was a mode exclusively their own and complete without the interference of a third estate.

In proposing this method of procedure, which closely resembled that proposed by Fox, but which carefully avoided the objectionable features in Fox's scheme, Grattan was not solely influenced by considerations affecting the Constitution, though we have the authority of Lord Campbell for asserting that in proceeding by Address the Irish Parliament pursued a course far

more in accordance with the Constitution than did that of England. The real and determining cause for the line of policy he pursued is to be found in the close alliance which had been established between him and the Leaders of the English Opposition. Ever since the beginning of his Parliamentary career, Grattan had felt a strong personal regard for Fox. All the great measures with which his name had been connected had, moreover, been obtained while Fox was in office. Gratitude for past concessions, and the anticipation, or if rumour spoke truly, the promise of being allowed to carry those measures of secondary reform, such as a Place and Pension Bill, which he regarded as essential to the independence of the Legislature, were alone sufficient to account for the line of policy he pursued. The great object which he had at heart was the reconstruction of the Irish Administration on a popular and patriotic basis. So long as the Executive remained irresponsible except to the English Ministry there was always a danger that corrupt practices would prevail, and that remedial measures would be resisted. Nor did he find any difficulty in carrying his measure through Parliament. The whole tribe of pensioners and placemen, true to what they imagined to be their own interests, and ever ready to worship the rising sun, were at his beck and call, and, as FitzGibbon ironically remarked, no matter what scheme the right honourable gentleman chose to formulate, he was sure to have a majority.

On February 19th, both Houses gave their assent to the Address, and it was presented to the Lord Lieutenant for transmission to the Prince of Wales. But this duty Buckingham declined to perform, alleging as his reason that he did not consider himself warranted to lay before the Prince of Wales an Address, purporting to invest

His Royal Highness with powers to take upon himself the government of the kingdom before he was enabled by law to do so. Thereupon, commissioners were immediately appointed to go to England and present the Address, and a strong vote of censure passed against the Lord Lieutenant for this grave dereliction in the performance of his duties. More than this, the House of Commons, anticipating that he might be led, like Lord Townshend, to prorogue Parliament and protest against their proceedings, agreed, on the motion of Grattan, to restrict supplies to two months. It was on this occasion that FitzGibbon used those words which at the time gave so much offence, and which subsequent events construed into a settled determination on the part of Government to corrupt Parliament.

"I recollect," he said, "Lord Townshend's proroguing the Parliament, and I recollect when next they met they voted him an address of thanks, which address cost this nation half a million of money. I hope to God I shall never again see such effects from party; I hope to God I shall never again see half a million of the people's money employed to procure an address from their representatives; I have ever endeavoured to defend the people, and ever shall oppose measures which may lead to an address that will cost them half a million."

Having thus secured Parliament from an insidious attack on the part of the Administration, Grattan proceeded without delay on March 3rd to lay before it those measures which he regarded as necessary to safeguard the Constitution. The first, he said, affected the City of Dublin police. At present that institution could only be considered as a scheme of patronage to the Castle and corruption to the city. The measure had been resisted by Lord Buckingham's Government, but he promised the House that a Bill to that effect should soon be introduced. A further measure he had in view was a Bill to restrain the abuse of pensions after the manner

adopted in England, but which likewise Lord Buckingham had opposed. Also he should propose a Bill for the restraining revenue officers from voting at elections, as was the custom in England. But the proposal to which he begged to call the immediate attention of the House was one for preventing great offices of state being given to absentees.

But by this time the news of the King's recovery had reached Ireland, and the effect of it was at once visible. The placemen and pensioners again veered round, and Grattan's proposal was rejected by 115 to 106. Every day fresh desertions took place. The Minister's mouth was in every one's ear, and his hand in every one's palm. To those to whom a pension offered no attraction, an amnesty was held out by Government on condition of giving Government an unqualified support. The rejection of this proffered amnesty was followed by the instant dismissal of the Duke of Leinster, the Earl of Shannon, the Ponsonbys, and a number of other individuals holding places valued at nearly £20,000 a-year. Not content with this, corruption of the most wholesale description was resorted to. Seven peers were created; nine others were promoted; several baronets made; £13,000 a-year more was added to the pension list, and a crowd of new and often sinecure offices were created, which were given to members of Parliament. For his unique services FitzGibbon was raised to the Peerage as Baron FitzGibbon, and rewarded with the Chancellorship in succession to Lord Lifford, who died in July. Having given his consent to these measures, the Marquis of Buckingham returned to England amidst the execrations of the nation. Pending the appointment of his successor, Lord FitzGibbon and Speaker Foster were on June 30th sworn Lords Justices of the kingdom.

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CHAPTER V.

"GOVERNMENT BY CORRUPTION."

1789-1794.

Formation of the Whig Club—Opposition attack—A stormy session—Dissolution of Parliament—Grattan returned for Dublin City—Tactics of the Opposition—Influence of French Revolutionary ideas—Rise of the United Irishmen—Situation of the Catholics—Langrishe's Relief Bill—Catholic agitation—Idea of a Legislative Union—Catholic Convention—Catholic Relief Bill—Demand for Parliamentary reform—Conduct of Government—Religious disturbances in Armagh—Convention Bill of 1793—Ponsonby's Reform Bill rejected.

We have now reached a period of critical importance in the history of Ireland. The desperate attempt made by Grattan to wrest the government out of the hands of FitzGibbon and the Beresford faction, and to render Administration responsible to Parliament, had been frustrated by the recovery of George III. and the confirmation of Pitt and his friends in office. The attempt had failed, and like all similar failures had only served to aggravate the situation by strengthening the hands of those against whom the attack had been directed. Commanding an overwhelming majority in both Houses of Parliament, Government was practically absolute. Except the influence of England, there was no power capable of withstanding or restraining the action of the Castle. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the situation when we remember that in point of time it

coincided with the first movements of the French Revolution. The effect of that momentous event was twofold. It hardened Government against all concessions, no matter how moderate, while at the same time it infused into the minds of the people a hope of liberty. To the former it came as a warning not to relax in the slightest degree the control of authority; to the latter as an inspiration and prophecy of political independence. It was certain that sooner or later these two ideas would come into open conflict. Properly controlled, the struggle might have ended for the peace and happiness of Ireland. Suppressed as it was it ended in a terrific explosion, which left Government victorious, but which utterly blasted the happiness of Ireland, and from the effects of which she even now suffers.

Exasperated, but by no means disheartened by the total collapse of their hopes, and the wholesale corruption that followed the recovery of the King and the victory of Government, the members of the Opposition immediately recognised the paramount necessity of sinking all minor differences amongst themselves, and of uniting together in a determined effort against Government. It was this necessity, together with the example of the Opposition in England, that led to the formation of the Whig Club in June, 1789. Though stigmatised by FitzGibbon as a mere "porter club" under another name, the Whig Club comprised some of the most illustrious and wealthy men in Ireland. Its objects, as announced in its manifesto, were of the most moderate and anti-radical description. So far from even demanding a reduction of the franchise, an abolition of nomination boroughs, or an enfranchisement of the Roman Catholics, it limited its aim to the attainment of such measures of secondary reform as had already been adopted in

England, but which the Government of Ireland had hitherto uniformly resisted. True, there were some, like Grattan, who would have been willing to adopt a more radical programme; but to the majority a Place Bill, a Pension Bill, a Bill to repeal or modify the Dublin Police, and a disqualification of revenue officers from voting, would have given ample satisfaction. The establishment of the club was hailed with great satisfaction, not only in Ireland, but by Burke in England. To him it seemed a guarantee of progress within the limits of the Constitution, and a barrier against the encroachment of revolutionary principles.

The struggle with the Government was not long delayed. On January 5th, 1790, Lord Buckingham's successor, the Earl of Westmorland, arrived in Dublin, and on the 21st, Parliament was opened with the ordinary Speech from the Throne. Grattan, though he did not mean to oppose the Address, took the opportunity to animadvert severely on the conduct of the late viceroy, whose character and administration he thus depicted in glowing colours:

"You remember," he said, "his entry into the capital, trampling on the hearse of the Duke of Rutland, and seated in a triumphal car drawn by public credulity, on one side fallacious hope, on the other many-mouthed profession; a figure with two faces, one turned to the Treasury, the other presented to the people, and with a double tongue speaking contradictory languages. This Minister alights; justice looks up to him with empty hopes and peculation faints with idle alarms. He finds the city a prey to an unconstitutional police; he continues it. He finds the country over-burthened with a shameful pension list; he increases it. He finds the House of Commons swarming with placemen; he multiplies them. He finds the salary of the Secretary increased to prevent a pension; he grants a pension. He finds the kingdom drained by absentee employments, and by compensations to buy them home; he gives the best reversion in the country to an absentee—his brother. He finds the Government had, at different times, disgraced itself by creating sinecures to gratify

corrupt affection; he makes two Commissioners of the Rolls, and gives one of them to another brother. He finds the second council to the Commissioners put down because useless; he revives it. He finds the Boards of Accounts and Stamps annexed by public compact; he divides them. He finds the Boards of Customs and Excise united by public compact; he divides them. He finds three resolutions declaring that seven Commissioners of Revenue are sufficient; he makes nine. He finds the country has suffered by some peculations in the ordnance; he increases the salaries of officers, and gives the places to members—members of Parliament."

Having thus as it were cleared the ground, Opposition opened a fierce and determined attack on Government. Taking as his text the recent addition to the number of Revenue Commissioners, Grattan, on February 1st, launched out into a vigorous attack on the late Administration for their corrupt practices. It was the intention of the Opposition, he declared, to combat a project to govern the country by corruption. That project, of which they had already had some experience, was not like the supremacy of the British Parliament—a thunderbolt, nor like the twenty propositions—a mine of artifice; but without the force of the one or the fraud of the other would answer all the purposes of both. Such a project carried out systematically amounted to a dissolution of all government. He would remind honourable members of the state of the representation. Of the returns to the House of Commons, more than two-thirds were private property, many of them actually sold to the Minister; while the number of placemen and pensioners sitting in the House nearly equalled one-half of the whole efficient body. The Bills necessary to purge the public weal, and to defend Parliament against the Ministers of the Crown, had been by them systematically resisted, and the House had been taught to believe that in order to keep his station the Viceroy might resort to any measures;

and that having lost the support of Parliament by his offences he might strive to regain it by corruption. Such a policy and principle he would not call criminal; he would not say it was repugnant to the doctrines of all the great authors that ever wrote on government; but it was just that very policy and that very principle which all of them had pronounced to be the destruction of liberty, and which one in particular (Locke) had described as a crime amounting to a breach of trust, tending towards a dissolution of the State. The real cause of the evil was the want of any adequate responsibility on the part of Government. Ministers could afford to laugh at the sword of justice which fell short of their heads and only precipitated on their reputations. There was in Ireland no axe and therefore no good Minister. On this occasion Grattan was ably supported by Sir L. Parsons, afterwards Lord Rosse, who asserted that he could not conceive anything more mischievous than an arrogant system of administration, which affected to despise and which might in the end alienate the affections of the people. If the greatest enemy to the connection of the two kingdoms were to plot what would sap it most; if the evil genius of England was about to pronounce his last curse on the Empire for its final dissolution, it would be that an arrogant, self-sufficient, incapable, and corrupt Administration should triumph in Ireland until it blasted every sentiment of affection for the English Government which remained in the bosoms of the Irish. The debate was carried on with great violence till near two o'clock in the morning, when Grattan's motion was rejected by 135 to 80.

On February 4th, the attack was renewed by Curran in regard to the division of the Board of Stamps and

Accounts. His motion was, however, rejected by 141 to 81. On February 11th, Mr. Forbes moved an Address to His Majesty respecting the expenses and revenue of the country; but his motion was lost by 136 to 92. On February 15th, Mr. George Ponsonby moved an Address to the King, complaining of the public expense of the previous year, and of the many new and increased salaries that had been annexed to offices granted to members of Parliament. After a warm debate which lasted till one o'clock in the morning, the motion was negatived by 146 to 87. As the session advanced each succeeding debate grew fiercer than the one preceding. Many coarse personalities were substituted for argument on both sides. Ministers were taunted with lack of honesty and ability, while their followers were twitted with being bought and hired to vote against their consciences and country. Opposition on the other hand was charged with being arrogant and turbulent, merely for the sake of ousting their rivals from office. Grattan, in particular, was very obnoxious to Government on account of his perseverance and unparallelled power of invective. On no occasion during the session did he press them more closely than on February 20th, when he arose suddenly and unexpectedly to arraign Ministers with treason against the Constitution. Opposition, he declared, would still persist in combating the project to govern the country by means of corruption. Hitherto, they had contended against those parts of the system which went to undermine the Constitution without an apparent breach of the law, and which might therefore impose on the public as a government by law; but there was another part of the project wherein Ministers had not only attempted to undermine the Constitution but had actually broken the laws. For that they were impeachable. Had the Ministers of the Crown

only agreed to sell one peerage and apply the money to purchase one seat, they had been guilty of an impeachable offence. But it was not one or two instances. They had introduced a regular trade or commerce, or rather brokerage of honours, and had thus established in the money arising from that sale a fund for corrupting the representation. They were guilty not of one impeachable offence merely, but of a project to undermine the fundamental laws of the land. To call such a system of corruption, of carrying a question at the loss of money and character, Government, was a misuse of language. The present Ministry was unable to govern the country, and he would therefore move that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into the sale of peerages, and the purchase of seats in the House of Commons. The motion was, however, rejected by 144 to 88. His speech gave great offence, particularly to FitzGibbon, who declared that he ought to have been expelled from the House, and delivered up to the Bar of the Lords for the expressions he had used. Grattan eagerly accepted the challenge, and a day or two afterwards referred to the conduct of Lord FitzGibbon, in interfering in the debates in the House, as a gross violation of parliamentary decency. Objection had been taken to what he had said on a former occasion in regard to the sale of peerages. He begged to reiterate what he had then said.

"Why," he exclaimed, "do you not expel me now? Why not send me to the Bar of the Lords? Where is your adviser? Going out of this House, I shall repeat my sentiments, that His Majesty's Ministers are guilty of impeachable offences, and advancing to the Bar of the Lords, I shall repeat those sentiments; or, if the Tower is to be my habitation, I will there meditate the impeachment of these Ministers and return not to capitulate, but to punish."

On March 3rd, he brought forward a Bill to pre-

vent revenue officers from voting at elections. He succeeded so far as to get it into committee; but it was ultimately lost by 123 to 81. On March 5th, Mr. Forbes brought forward his Pension Bill, but it was also lost, the numbers being 124 to 96. The day following Curran moved an Address to the King, setting forth the expenses of the country, complaining of the unconstitutional and increasing influence of Government, and the improper distribution of places and honours. The motive to his motion was, he declared, that the gentlemen with whom he acted had been called upon with an air of authority by the occupants of the Treasury bench to account for their conduct during the session. On that conduct he was not afraid to appeal solemnly to the sense of the people on the eve of a political dissolution. His Bill, however, after a debate which lasted till four o'clock on Sunday morning, was lost by a majority of 141 to 90, as was also Mr. Forbes's Responsibility Bill. On April 5th, this short but animated session came to a close, and on the 8th Parliament was dissolved.

After the dissolution, the battle that had raged all the session within the Parliament House was transferred to the country at large, where it continued with unabated fury. The elections to the new Parliament caused great excitement. So far, however, as the Opposition were concerned, the field for contest was very restricted. It was, of course, useless, in the vast majority of cases, to make any attack on the boroughs. To do so even in a single instance was, as Grattan remarked, more than a private fortune could stand. But wherever it seemed possible to defeat Government, the Opposition, backed by the resources of the Whig Club, made a most determined effort. Grattan himself took a very prominent part in the contest, and, surrendering his seat for the

borough of Charlemont, allowed himself to be put in nomination with Lord Henry Fitzgerald, the Duke of Leinster's brother, for the representation of the City of Dublin, in opposition to the Castle candidates, Alderman Exshaw and Alderman Sankey. It was on this occasion that Theobald Wolfe Tone first came into notice as the author of *A Review of the Conduct of Administration, addressed to the Electors and Free People of Ireland.* However the elections went elsewhere, and on the whole the Opposition appear to have lost rather than gained ground, Grattan and Fitzgerald were completely successful in the metropolis. Never since the return of Dr. Lucas did any event afford such general satisfaction. On the night of the victory Dublin was illuminated; and the popular members were chaired with every demonstration of joy.

Parliament assembled on January 20th, 1791, and on February 3rd Opposition opened their attack by a motion to inquire into the advantages accruing from the pensions and additional salaries granted by Government. The motion was seconded by Grattan, but it was lost by a majority of 117 to 56. Such a majority at the outset augured badly for Opposition and the redress of grievances, but the renewal of the attack greatly exasperated Government, and threats of some measure being taken "to put an end to vexatious suits" were let fall. On February 8th, however, Grattan returned to the subject of the sale of peerages and the purchase of seats in the House of Commons, and moved for a committee to prove the fact. The motion was rejected by a majority of 135 to 81. But it was again renewed by Curran two or three days later, when Grattan took the opportunity to advert to the general declamation uttered by the advocates of a corrupt Government against the

defenders of an injured people. Four times, these advocates complained, had this grievance been brought forth, just as if grievances were only to be matter of public debate when they were matter of novelty, or as if grievances were trading questions for a party or a person to press, to sell and to abandon; or as if honourable members were sent to Parliament to act farces to please the appetite of the public, and not to persevere in the redress of grievances.

While Government was thus stubbornly resisting every effort to reform Parliament, and to bring it more into accordance with the requirements and wishes of the nation, the principles of the French Revolution were rapidly being disseminated throughout the country. The Presbyterians of the north, in particular, were strongly infected by them. They had long been distinguished for their liberal views, and at the Volunteer Convention of 1783 the delegates from Belfast had strenuously urged the admission of the Catholics to a share of the franchise. In the light of the doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of men, it was impossible for them not to regard with feelings of mingled shame and indignation the state of their own country, and the total exclusion of the Roman Catholics—of three-fourths of the entire nation—from any share in the Constitution. Their identity of interests on many subjects, and especially in regard to tithes, tended still further to obliterate their ancient animosities, and to pave the way for a union under a common standard. The imperfect and corrupt state of their own representation deeply affected them. Their minds recurred to the year 1782, when they had wrested a Constitution from England, and the thought of what they had then done stimulated them to further exertions.

The rapid progress of the new movement startled and alarmed Government. Towards the close of 1790, it was reported that a dangerous movement had sprung up in Belfast, that meetings had been held and resolutions passed eulogizing the glorious spirit shown by the French in adopting the wise system of Republican government, and in abrogating the enormous power and abused influence of the clergy, inviting the Protestant Dissenters everywhere to support with all their influence the enfranchisement of the Catholics, and to co-operate with the Catholics in advocating a radical reform of Parliament and the total abolition of tithes.

Nor was the alarm which the new movement awakened confined solely to Government. To many of the more timid of the Opposition the projected union between the Catholics and Dissenters seemed fraught with the gravest danger to the State, and particularly to Charlemont, who regarded it as a necessary precursor to a union with England. Accordingly, in order to neutralise, if possible, the effect of the movement, and to direct it into what were supposed to be safer and more constitutional channels, a northern Whig Club was founded in Belfast, under the auspices of the Earl of Charlemont, in 1790. It, however, exercised but little influence; its scheme of secondary reform was scouted as wholly insufficient, and it speedily fell into discredit.

Meanwhile, the principle of universal toleration gained ground rapidly, especially amongst the mercantile population. On July 14th, 1791, the anniversary of the French Revolution was celebrated with great popular rejoicings at Belfast. Not content with parading the portraits of Franklin and Mirabeau through the streets, the volunteers, in general meeting, passed an Address of warm congratulation and encouragement to the National Assembly.

"It is good for human nature," said they, "that the grass grows where the Bastile stood. We do rejoice at an event which seemed the breaking of a charm that held universal France in a Bastile of civil and religious bondage." "We, too," they added, "have a country, and we hold it very dear, so dear to us its interest, that we wish all civil and religious intolerance annihilated in this land; so dear to us its honour, that we wish an eternal stop to the traffic of public liberty, which is bought by one and sold to another; so dear to us its freedom, that we wish for nothing so much as a real representation of the national will, the surest guide and guardian of national happiness."

The tendency to a union with the Catholics which these resolutions manifested immediately aroused the suspicions of Government, and in July Westmorland wrote:—"The language and bent of the conduct of these Dissenters is to unite with the Catholics, and their union would be very formidable. That union is not yet made, and I believe and hope it never could be." His hopes were, however, doomed to be disappointed. The movement continued to grow, and in August it received a considerable impetus from a pamphlet by Wolfe Tone, in which he advocated a close alliance between the Protestants and Catholics as the only effectual method for removing the grievances under which the country groaned. Ten thousand copies of the pamphlet were sold, and its influence on the country was very great. In October the first society of United Irishmen was founded at Belfast, and was described in a Belfast newspaper as "a union of Irishmen of every religious persuasion in order to obtain a complete reform of the Legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty." Their example was speedily followed in Dublin and elsewhere. Though many of their members were anxious from the first to establish a Republic, by far the greater number would have rested satisfied with such a reform of the Legislature as would have made it a fair representative

of the wishes of the people. Their idea was, that Ireland should be divided into 300 electoral districts, each of them returning one member; that every full-grown male should have a vote, subject only to the condition of six months' residence, that the representatives should be paid and exempt from all property qualification, and that Parliaments should be annual. With the programme of the Whig Club they had no sympathy whatever. Such measures as a Place Bill and a Pension Bill, though good enough in themselves, they regarded as wholly inadequate to meet the requirements of the nation. Nothing, they maintained, could be done without a union with the Catholics. Catholic emancipation and a radical reform of Parliament must advance side by side; any attempt to dissociate the two questions would [illegible]

[illegible] though inclined to reciprocate the sentiments [illegible] the Catholics were at first restrained by motives of prudence. Deprived by the penal laws of any share in the government of their country, the conduct of their affairs had rested in the hands of the Catholic Committee, a body hitherto exclusively composed of the dignitaries of the Church and the leading gentry. It was a highly respectable body, but its exertions on behalf of the great mass of the Catholics had been very lukewarm, and the slight relaxation of the penal laws which had taken place in 1774, in 1778, and in 1782, had been due rather to the progress of an enlightened opinion amongst the Protestants than to any efforts of the Catholic Committee. The extension of commercial advantages to Ireland, and the rise of a wealthy Roman Catholic trading community, had, however, of recent years, considerably affected the constitution of the Committee. To these men the conduct of the aristocratical element was

by no means satisfactory, nor did they think that constantly cringing to Government was a proper or manly way of advancing their claim. A proposal to leave the measure and extent of future relaxation of Catholic disabilities wholly to the Legislature brought matters to a crisis in December, 1791. The proposal was successfully resisted by the Democratic party, lead by John Keogh, a Dublin tradesman of considerable ability, and was immediately followed by the secession of sixty-eight of their opponents, including their leader, Lord Kenmare. But it was remarked, as an indication of the new spirit that was beginning to prevail throughout the country, that in almost all the counties and large towns of the [illegible] resolutions were passed by the Catholics censuring the seceders and approving the conduct of the [illegible] reorganised, and in the spring of the following year Keogh and four other leading members were appointed to lay the petition of the Catholics before the King.

Meanwhile, during the autumn of 1791, very alarming reports were received in England of the progress of affairs in Ireland. Influenced, doubtless, by Burke, whose conduct in regard to the French Revolution, gave great weight to his representations on the Catholic question, the English Ministry were anxious to adopt a liberal policy, and by satisfying the just claims of the Catholics to detach them from the northern Dissenters, whose programme they regarded with distrust, and far more dangerous in its scope than that of the Catholic Committee. Accordingly, in December, Dundas laid before Westmorland the line of policy which the English Ministry wished to see adopted by the Irish Administration. The Ministry, he said, had viewed with great concern the attempt made to associate different religious

denominations in Ireland for seditious purposes, but they had hopes that the Catholics, grateful for former concessions, would not allow themselves to be seduced from that tone of conduct which had in the past been attended with such benefits to themselves and such advantage to the kingdom at large. Nevertheless, the Ministry could not ignore the just claims of the Catholics, and were decidedly of opinion that it was essentially necessary, as a matter of justice and sound policy, to extend to them such a modified participation in the benefits of the Constitution as would give them a stake in the political prosperity of the country, and at the same time be consistent with the general interests of the Empire.

The proposal to concede the Catholic demands coming from such a quarter greatly exasperated the Irish Administration, and Westmorland's reply to Dundas was couched in a strain of indignant surprise that the proposal should ever have been made. Even admitting the wisdom of the proposition, which he disputed, it was, he declared, wholly out of the power of Administration to grant the suffrage to the Catholics. Protestant opinion was so adverse to it that the proposal would be instantly rejected by Parliament. Much alarmed by these representations, or as Burke and Grattan roundly asserted, these misrepresentations of the Irish Government, Dundas replied that, although the Ministry still held to their opinion that the measure would be attended with the greatest advantages to Ireland, they had no wish to press it against the judgment of the Irish Administration.

The effect of this qualified withdrawal was instantly visible when Parliament reassembled on January 19th, 1792. The Speech from the Throne stated that the country had made great progress in trade, manufactures, and

industry, but contained no reference to the Catholics. In a speech remarkable for its vigour and beauty of style, Grattan tried to awaken Parliament to a sense of its position and its duty to the country.

"It is now," he said, "ten years since you recovered your Constitution and three since, in the opinion of some, you have lost it. Your present Ministers made two attempts on your liberties; the first failed, and the second, in a degree, has succeeded. You remember the first: you remember the Propositions. . . . . The second attempt was the modelling of Parliament. In 1789, fifteen new salaries, with several new pensions to the members thereof, were created at once, and added to the old overgrown Parliamentary influence of the Crown: in other words, the expenditure of the interest of bribes to buy the House of Commons; the sale of the peerage and the purchase of seats in the Commons; the formation of a stock purse by Ministers to monopolize boroughs and buy up representation . . . . . such conduct put the Constitution of Ireland not merely below a Republic, but below any other form of government . . . It was not a mixed Monarchy with parts happily tempered, and so forth—the cant of grave and superannuated addresses—but a rank and vile and simple and absolute government, rendered so by means that made every part of it vicious and abominable.

"The history of nations is oftentimes a farce." "There was a time when the vault of liberty could hardly contain the flight of your pinion. Some of you went forth like a giant rejoicing in his strength, and now you stand like elves at the door of your own pandemonium. The armed youth, like a thousand streams thundered from a thousand hills, filled the plain with the congregated waters, in whose mirror was seen for a moment the watery image of the British Constitution: the waters subside, the torrents cease, the rill ripples within its own bed, and the boys and children of the village paddle in the brook."

One gleam of brightening hope there was to illumine the gloomy prospect; but even this was tempered by the suspicion that it was only a bribe intended to detach the Catholics from the Dissenters. Immediately after the

Address had been disposed of, Sir Hercules Langrishe, a firm supporter of Government, gave notice that he would, at a convenient time, bring forward a proposition for the relief of the Roman Catholics. Mr. Secretary Hobart said he was acquainted with the scope of the measure, and, as it did not at all militate against either the Church or the State, it should have his support. Accordingly, on January 25th, Langrishe gave a sketch of his plan, which he prefaced by an interesting account of former remedial measures. By the present Bill it was proposed to open to them the Bar; to permit intermarriage with Protestants on condition that it was celebrated by a Protestant clergyman, but continuing the disfranchisement of a Protestant husband marrying a Popish wife and subjecting the Catholic clergyman celebrating such a marriage to the penalty of death, at the same time declaring the marriage itself null and void. It further gave the Catholics the privilege of teaching schools without licence from the ordinary, and permitted them to take two or more apprentices.

The measure fell far short of the expectations of the Catholics and their friends, and a petition was immediately presented, signed by more than 600 respectable Protestants of Belfast, praying the Legislature to repeal all the penal laws and to put the Roman Catholics on the same footing as their Protestant fellow subjects. A few days afterwards a similar petition was presented on the part of the Catholic Committee. Both petitions were received and allowed to lie on the table. On February 18th, the Bill came on for the second reading. Rising to support it, Grattan remarked that he had the misfortune to differ from some of his constituents in the view he took of the Catholic question; but he would remind the House that this was a question that affected three millions

of their fellow subjects. By the existing laws the Roman Catholic was prevented from exercising his industry in any one profession, he could not obtain a degree in physic, he could not receive any education, foreign or domestic; he could not intermarry with a Protestant, he could not carry arms for his amusement or defence; he could not employ a Protestant servant to carry arms for him; he was bound without his consent, taxed without being represented, and excluded from all the political, civil, military, and constitutional functions, to which he was made to contribute. It was surely something on a question touching the repeal of the penal laws, that the principal causes for which they had been made had ceased to exist. There was no longer any fear of the Pope or the Pretender. He was anxious, he confessed, to see the establishment of a strong State with the Protestants at the head of it. But in order that the head of the State should be secure, it was desirable that its foundations should be broad and firm. The admission of the Catholics into the Constitution, it was said, would endanger the Protestant ascendency. But that ascendency was already toppling to its ruin. There was in that House one man who had more power in Parliament than all the Protestant ascendency. The country was governed by the ascendency of the Treasury. The situation was grave in the extreme. Suppose the Minister, as he had often proposed corrupt terms to the Protestants, should propose crafty ones to the Catholics, and should say, "You are three-fourths of the people excluded from the blessings of the Irish Constitution: accept the advantages of an English union." Here was a proposal probably supported by the people of England and rendered plausible to at least three-fourths of the people of Ireland. He mentioned the subject of a union,

because he had heard it had been darkly suggested as the last resort of Protestant desperation against Catholic pretensions. He mentioned it to warn the Protestant against it. He would be the first victim. There would be Catholic equality and Parliamentary extinction. It would be fatal to the Catholic also: he would not be raised, but the Protestant would be depressed and his chance of liberty for ever blasted. It would be fatal to England; beginning with a false compromise, which they might call union, to end in eternal separation through the progress of two civil wars. He begged them to be wise in time and by incorporation with the Catholics to acquire new strength for themselves.

His warnings fell on listless or hostile ears, and the Government taking advantage of the attitude of the House moved the rejection of the Catholic petition after it had been allowed to lie on the table. The step was unusual and exceedingly offensive, but it was carried by a majority of 203 to 23.

"Believe me," said Grattan, addressing the House, "you may as well plant your foot on the earth and hope by that resistance to stop the diurnal revolution which advances you to that morning sun, which is to shine alike on the Protestant and the Catholic, as you can hope to arrest the progress of that other light, reason and justice, which approach to liberate the Catholic and liberalize the Protestant. Even now the question is on its way, and making its destined and irresistible progress, which you, with all your authority, will have no power to resist, no more than any other great truth, or any great ordinance of nature, or any law of motion which mankind is free to contemplate, but cannot resist. There is a justice linked to their cause, and a truth that sets off their application."

On February 24th, the Catholic Bill was read a third time.

But if Government expected to dissociate the Catholics from the United Irishmen by this meagre and ungraciously

conceded measure of relief, they were soon disabused of that opinion. Even the seceders from the Catholic Committee were disgusted, and intimated their intention of again co-operating for a complete emancipation. The conduct of the Committee meanwhile had been very moderate. After the rejection of their petition, a circular letter was drawn up to the Catholics of Ireland, calling upon them to appoint delegates from each county and all the great cities to form an enlarged Committee, instructed to petition the King for the elective franchise. The proposal alarmed the Government, and proceedings were instituted to frustrate it. During the summer and autumn, wherever Government felt strong enough, corporate or county meetings were held to reprobate the plan; but where defeat or even formidable resistance was dreaded, similar resolutions were entered into by the grand juries; the Lord Chancellor and Speaker Foster being particularly active in promoting this Anti-Catholic agitation. Referring to it afterwards, Grattan said:

"The most unfortunate error of our Ministry was their interference with grand juries against the Catholics. . . . . They took the lead in fomenting a religious war; they began it; they acted in the mongrel capacity of country gentlemen and Ministers. They acted against the Catholics as country gentlemen, and encouraged the Protestants as Ministers. They had, I understand, informed the British Ministry that the interference of the Crown could not induce a majority to vote for the Catholic pretensions, and then they themselves took a leading part to make the difficulty in the country which they complained of in their despatches."

It was while the country was labouring under this excitement that Pitt wrote to Westmorland on Nov. 18th: "The idea of the present fermentation gradually bringing both parties to think of a union with this country has long been in my mind. I hardly dare flatter myself with the hope of its taking place, but I believe it, though

itself not easy to be accomplished, to be the only solution for other and greater difficulties." Taken in connection with Grattan's reference to the subject, this expression of opinion by Pitt is interesting as showing how the idea of a union was beginning to press itself upon the attention of statesmen as a possible solution of political difficulties. Pitt was plainly becoming exasperated at the obstacles that confronted him. His conduct towards Ireland up to this point had been on the whole generous; but the opposition shown to it by the Castle clique was daily rendering such a policy more and more impracticable. The authority of England was growing weaker and weaker. The conduct of FitzGibbon, as Burke remarked, was fast bringing matters to a crisis. He would neither allow Pitt to govern Ireland, nor Parliament to govern itself. Government, indeed, seemed to be a thing wholly given up in Ireland. The only remedy for the state of anarchy into which the country was drifting was, in Pitt's opinion, the strong hand of England. To Grattan this doctrine was most repulsive. Union in his opinion meant political extinction, and a host of evils which could as yet be only dimly foreseen. The difficulty might have been surmounted had the relations between him and Pitt been in any degree as cordial as they were between him and Fox. But his conduct on the Regency Question had disgusted Pitt, while the twenty propositions, which Pitt had tried to palm off on the Irish Parliament, had raised unconquerable suspicions in Grattan's mind as to Pitt's honesty. The real cause of stumbling was the Irish Government itself.

On December 3rd, 1792, the Catholic Committee or Convention, as it was called, met in Dublin, in Tailors' Hall, in Back Lane, whence it obtained the sobriquet of the Back Lane Parliament. The delegates immediately

proceeded to the business for which they had been convened, and having passed a petition setting forth the disabilities under which the Catholics suffered, and praying the King to recommend to the Parliament to take into consideration the whole of their situation, they appointed Edward Byrne, John Keogh, James E. [illegible] Christopher Bellew, and Sir Thomas Trench, [illegible] their secretary, to lay their petition before the King. At Belfast the deputies received an ovation from the United Irishmen, who escorted them to the water's edge, and followed them with good wishes for their success. Grattan, who as usual had gone to England in the autumn, was already in London, when the deputation arrived. His presence was of the utmost service to the Catholics. The Irish Government, it appears, unable to prevent the meeting of the Convention, had industriously spread reports exceedingly detrimental to the Catholics. It was reported that they were in a state of rebellion, and that they had joined with the United Irishmen to overthrow the Constitution. Knowing the falsity of these reports, Grattan did his utmost to remove the bad effects they had created; but, at the same time, he earnestly besought them to avoid Republican principles and French politics. "The situation of France," he wrote, "may give them strength; but its proceedings must never be an example." After a fortnight's delay, during which time Ministers were making up their minds as to the line of policy they ought to pursue, the deputies were introduced at St. James's by Dundas. They delivered their petition to the King, who was very gracious and polite on the occasion.

The effect of their embassy was at once visible on the reassembling of Parliament on January 10th, 1793. For the first time in their history the situation of the Roman

Catholics was commended to the serious attention of Parliament in the King's Speech. They were no longer spoken of as "Papists" but as "His Majesty's Catholic subjects." The alteration was significant of the different position in which they now stood, than when the last Speech from the Throne was delivered. Everybody knew that it was a victory won in the very teeth of the opposition of the Irish Administration. Nor did Grattan spare them in this hour of victory. Speaking on the Address he admitted that the situation of affairs was alarming, but the persons responsible for it were His Majesty's Ministers. They had been warned in 1790 and in 1791 that a government of clerks would not do, that a government by rank majorities would not do, that Ireland would not be long governed by the trade of Parliament. Their warnings had been despised and their advice rejected, but the system of corruption had brought its own punishment with it, and had totally deprived Parliament of all weight, authority, and credit with the country. But the evil had not stopped there: it had undermined the Throne. Gentlemen condemned the writings of Mr. Paine as seditious. But there were two species of levellers—levellers of principles and levellers of constitutions. The Minister who sold the Peerage was a leveller; the Minister who publicly bought the House of Commons by the increase of about twenty or a difference of forty votes was a leveller. He was a leveller of character, authority, and principle, without which political institutions vanish. The French levellers destroyed the nobility and the Throne to erect the despotism of the people. The Irish levellers had endeavoured to destroy the power and credit of the nobility and Commons to erect the despotism of the King. In that endeavour they had undermined the Throne, they had stripped the King's Government,

together with the two Houses of Parliament, of all kind of credit or authority or weight in the minds of the people of Ireland. Take, for example, their conduct on the Catholic question. They had begun by insulting the Catholics, and ended by menacing them. Fortunately His Majesty had interposed his authority to defend his loyal subjects against the violence of his Ministers. The recognition of the King was [illegible] of distinguished wisdom and ought to be so recognised in the Address. At a time when attempts had been made against the thrones of princes, it behoved them to point out to the people the King as their deliverer, and to distinguish him from his Ministers, so that however they might abhor the conduct of the Administration, it should be evident to the world that [illegible] necessary duty and loyalty in support of the Throne [illegible] they were by every interest, and by every political [illegible] connected. There was no division on the Address. The amendment proposed by Grattan, specially thanking the King for his bounty, was carried with what Langrishe not unhappily described as "acrimonious unanimity."

Four days after, the House of Commons on the motion of Grattan, amended by Mr. Corry, a supporter of Administration, unanimously agreed to a committee to inquire into the state of representation. And on the day following, Secretary Hobart gave notice that at an early date he would move that the situation of the Roman Catholics should be taken into consideration. The announcement gave great satisfaction to the Opposition, and it was remarked that Ministers had done more in the first week of the session than ever before, to tranquillise the nation and restore confidence to Parliament. The two questions, Parliamentary reform and emancipation of the Catholics, were thus fairly launched side by side.

It was the great wish of Grattan that they should proceed together and that no attempt should be made to dissociate them. Such an idea, however, was very far from the minds of Government. It had been with extreme reluctance that they had consented to listen to the claims of the Catholics, and they only did so now in order to play off the Catholics against the United Irishmen. As yet their design was not apparent. On February 4th, Hobart moved for leave to bring in his Catholic Relief Bill, and on the 9th the House went into committee to consider the state of the representation. It was impossible, Grattan declared, to postpone the question any longer. It could no longer be tolerated that less than 100 persons should return more than two-thirds of the House. Such a state of affairs was not even an aristocracy; it was an oligarchy of the worst type. The expenses of an election under such a system were simply ruinous, and the worst of it was these expenses sooner or later fell on the nation. A seat in the House, he understood, cost £3,000. It was his desire to lay the axe at the root of a trade in which the political morality as well as the freedom of the country were intimately concerned. He had heard it alleged as an excuse for the existing system that they could not agree about a better. But was that so? Everybody agreed, he supposed, that twelve burgesses should not return two members; in other words, they were agreed on the destruction of close boroughs. They were agreed, moreover, that the basis of representation ought to be the propertied class in the community. They could not differ as to the propriety of residence and of extending the franchise to freemen by birth, marriage, or the exercise of trade for a certain time. Perhaps, also, they should not differ as to extending the franchise to land-holders for years, having a

certain valuable interest, a universal registry, elections to be limited in time, and to be carried out in different places at once, and to an oath to be taken by the candidate, and repeated by the member, "that he had not been at any expense whatsoever, nor paid any sum of money whatsoever, to procure his return by himself or others." These broad principles carried into execution would restore the Constitution to health, and would produce that steady calm in the minds of men, which followed from the sense of a good Constitution, and the blessing of an honest representation. He concluded by moving that the representation of the people was charged with great and heavy charges and grievous inconveniences in consequence of elections and returns of members to serve in Parliament, and that such abuses ought to be abolished. The resolution was met by Government with an amendment "that under the present system of representation the privileges of the people, the trade, and the prosperity of the country have greatly increased, and that if any other plan be produced likely to increase those advantages, and not to hazard what we already possess, it ought to be taken into the most serious consideration." The amendment was carried by 153 to 71.

Such a defeat was not encouraging, but it was only when taken in connection with the delay that attended the introduction of the Catholic Relief Bill that it assumed an air of importance in the eyes of the Opposition. Since February 4th nothing had been heard of Hobart's Bill, and, on the 15th, Grattan sharply reminded Government that the country was beginning to doubt their sincerity, and to suspect that they were delaying the measure in order indefinitely to postpone the question of reform. Three days later the Catholic Bill was introduced and read for the first time. It proposed to give to the Catholics the

elective franchise, to extend to them the right of sitting on grand and petty juries in all cases, of endowing a college and schools, of carrying arms if they possessed a certain property qualification, of holding subordinate civil offices, and of being justices of the peace; finally, it repealed all the remaining penal laws respecting personal property. It was undoubtedly a great measure of relief, and was as such violently opposed by the Protestant ascendency party, with Dr. Duigenan at their head; but as a half measure excluding the Catholics from sitting in Parliament, it was condemned by the Opposition as not sufficiently conciliatory to the Catholics.

In perfect consistency with his previous conduct, Grattan, on February 22nd, when the Bill came up for its second reading, urged Government to complete their measure, and to do away with every shred of those laws which made the Catholics a distinct class in the community. He had, he said, listened to the arguments of gentlemen opposed to him—arguments of extraordinary weakness, of monopoly, of panic, of prejudice, of anything but religion. They had urged the Coronation Oath as a bar against the claims of the Catholics; they had urged this when the power of the Pope was extinct, and when the sting of the Catholic faith was withdrawn; they had urged it at a time when a new enthusiasm had gone forth in the place of religion much more adverse to kings than popery, and infinitely more prevailing—the spirit of republicanism. At such a time they had chosen to make the Catholics outcasts of a Protestant monarchy, and had left them no option but a Republic. He had read of a country where the whole business of life was neglected to give place to mathematical investigations. He could suppose a more extraordinary state where the law excluded from serving the public three-fourths of the people

unless they would give a theological opinion touching an abstract point of divinity, and verify that opinion on oath. The opponents of the complete enfranchisement of the Catholics were struggling with imaginary difficulties, nay, rather, with impossibilities. They tried to enchain the mind, to case in the volatile essential soul. Nor tower, nor dungeon, much less Parliament, could be retentive of the fires kindled in the breasts of their fellow subjects. He had heard, even in Ireland, addresses voted to Mr. Wilberforce, thanking him for his efforts to set free a distressed people: had their pity traversed leagues of sea to sit down by the black boy on the coast of Guinea, and had they forgotten the man at home by their side, their brother? He besought them, by one great act to cancel the penal code, and to prepare their minds for that bright order of time which already seemed to touch their condition.

Unamended, the Bill rapidly passed through Parliament, and in April, 1793, it received the Royal Assent. It had been carried with great majorities; opposition to it, which was very strong at first, seemed literally to have died out. But it was none the less carried, in opposition to the wishes of Government. The Lord Chancellor unequivocally expressed his dislike for it, and Speaker Foster declared that, though he could not blame Government for the course they had pursued, he should never cease to think it was extreme folly or indiscretion on the part of the British Ministry to raise the question at all. By these and similar expressions of opinion they managed to deprive the measure of all its graciousness, and to pave the way for further agitation. Having, however, in large measure, obtained the object for which it had been assembled, the Catholic Convention, immediately after the Royal Assent had been obtained to the Bill, dissolved

itself; but at its last meeting a resolution was passed earnestly exhorting the Catholics of Ireland to co-operate with their Protestant brethren in all legal and constitutional means to carry into effect a reform of the representation of the people in the Commons House. The Government witnessed its dissolution with pleasure, and resolved that it should be the last Convention of the kind. They had been defeated on the Catholic question; but they were determined to yield no further. Unfortunately for the cause of Parliamentary reform, the outbreak of a new movement about this time, attended with considerable disturbance of the peace, afforded them the opportunity they desired for passing a series of strong coercive measures.

One of the many happy results that had attended the volunteer movement in its earlier phases had been a tendency to a union between the Protestants and Catholics. Under the healthy influence of a national movement, old religious prejudices and animosities had rapidly disappeared amongst the upper and educated classes. But as the influence of the volunteers declined, the old religious feud began to revive amongst the lowest classes in the country districts, especially in the county of Armagh. During 1791 the feud assumed the appearance of something like open hostility. Under the pretence of being warranted by the Popery laws, several associations amongst the lower order of Protestants were formed in that year under the appellation of Peep o' Day Boys, whose object it was to scour the Catholic districts about daybreak, and strip the inhabitants of their firearms. The Catholics, of course, retaliated, and under the name of Defenders, entered into counter associations for attacking the Protestants. At first local and confined as much as mutual hatred would allow to actual self-defence, these

associations began in 1792 to spread through other parts of the kingdom. In proportion as the movement extended into districts where no Protestants of inferior rank in life were to be found, and therefore no outrages like those committed by the Peep o' Day Boys to be apprehended, it gradually lost its character of a religious feud, and became, in fact, an association of Catholic peasants for procuring a redress of those grievances, particularly tithes, under which they laboured. The views of the Defenders were far from distinct, though they had a general notion that something ought to be done for Ireland, and were inclined to look to an appeal to arms as the only method of achieving their object. They, therefore, formed themselves, as far as their knowledge would permit, upon a military system, and in order to procure arms, used to assemble at night, and take them from the houses of those who they conceived would eventually be their enemies.

Early in 1793, their disturbances assumed such proportions as to attract the attention of Parliament, and a secret committee was appointed by the House of Lords to enquire into their causes, to discover their promoters, and to prevent their extension. During the sitting of the Catholic Convention, rumours were current implicating the Convention and the United Irishmen with the Defenders, and though nothing of the sort appeared from the Report of the secret committee, that report concluded that as the result of their enquiries "it was incompatible with the public safety and tranquility of the kingdom to permit bodies of men in arms to assemble when they pleased without legal authority." Acting on the suggestion they had prompted, Government introduced a Bill to prevent the election or appointment of conventions, or other unlawful assemblies under pretence of preparing or

presenting public petitions. About the middle of July the Convention Bill having passed the Lords came before the House of Commons, when it was strongly opposed by Grattan. He considered it, he said, as one excess reforming another—as the violence of one side attacking the Constitution as that of the other did the Government. It appeared to him to be compounded of a dislike to the people in general and the Catholics in particular. It availed itself of present panic to abridge popular rights, and it found support in sanguine, but weak minds, who knew there was a disease, but had not sense enough to discover the remedy. The real object of the Bill was to stigmatise the Catholic Convention and to prevent the reform of Parliament. His grand objection was that it was a false declaration of law, and deprived the subject of his constitutional right of petitioning against grievances, by rendering the previous measure of consultation and deliberation criminal. An attempt made by him to limit its operation to one year failed, and after a fierce debate, which lasted till four o'clock in the morning, the Bill was passed by a majority of 101. The measure was accompanied by a Proclamation dissolving the volunteers, and an Act restraining the accumulation of arms and ammunition, and on August 16th this long and important session came to an end.

The conduct of the Government had apparently been crowned with success. They had evaded the question of reform, and their strong measures had reduced the country to an appearance of order and tranquility. When Parliament met, on January 21st, 1794, it was congratulated from the Throne on the success that had attended the King's armies abroad, and on the suppression of disturbance at home. In gratitude for these mercies Parliament expressed its intention of resolutely supporting

the King, and voted liberal supplies for the conduct of the war. Grattan cordially acquiesced in the Address. He did not, he said, intend to go into the causes of the war. He had only one view on the subject, which was, that Ireland should be guided by a fixed, steady, and unalterable resolution to stand or fall with Great Britain. At the same time he stated that the great object he had at heart was that she should improve her Constitution, correct its abuses, and assimilate it as nearly as possible to that of Great Britain.

Accordingly, on March 4th, a Reform Bill, of which Ponsonby had given notice at the beginning of the previous session, but which the Government had then succeeded in postponing, was read for the first time. It was a very moderate scheme, much less ambitious, indeed, than that which Flood had proposed. It left the suffrage and duration of Parliament entirely unchanged, but it proposed to add thirty-four members to the representation, and to enlarge the boroughs to an area of twenty-four miles, by throwing into them a considerable section of the adjoining county, thereby weakening the control of the local aristocracy over them. The Bill was warmly supported by Grattan. "I do not," he said, "say that this Bill, in its present shape, is perfect. On the contrary, I should wish to propose considerable alterations. . . . Even then I do not say the Bill would be an exact representation of the property of the country, or of the propertied part of the community. No, because that is impossible and that is unnecessary; no, but it would be a substantial representation of both; that is, it would answer all the political purposes of adequate representation; it would be *quod erat desideratum;* it would not be arithmetically equal, but it would be substantially and practically adequate." Whatever might be

thought of the scheme itself, and he was far from considering it perfect, it was evident that some such measure was absolutely indispensable. Parliament had to guard itself against two enemies — the leveller of the Constitution, and the friend of its abuses. Both extremes took different roads, but they arrived at the same end. The leveller proposed to subvert the King and Parliamentary Constitution by a rank and unqualified democracy; the friend of its abuses proposed to support the King and govern the Parliament, and, therefore, in the end, to overset both by a rank and an avowed corruption. They were both incendiaries: the one inflamed the people by senseless flattery, the other by senseless petulance: the one would destroy Parliament to pay his court to liberty, the other would destroy liberty to pay his court to Government; but the liberty of the one would end in confusion, and the government of the other in pollution. The one was a hypocrite that in the mimic trances of public zeal would overset the throne; the other was a saucy slave, more destitute of virtue than talent, who wrapped himself up in the threadbare gown of zeal for Government, and stabbed his country to the heart. After a prolonged debate the Bill was rejected by 142 to 44, and on March 25th Parliament was prorogued.

CHAPTER VI.

A CRISIS.

1794–1795.

Ministerial changes in England—Duke of Portland appointed Secretary of State—Pitt's Irish policy—Negotiations pending the appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—Interview between Pitt and Grattan—Pitt's *Memorandum*—Reception of the news in Ireland—Intrigues of "the Beresford faction"—Ministerial changes in Ireland—Grattan's schemes for Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform—Fitzwilliam's recall—Its effect on Ireland—Pitt's conduct considered.

DURING the spring of 1794, rumours were current in Ireland of an impending change in the Administration. The difference of opinion between Fox and Burke on the subject of the French Revolution had inspired Pitt with the hope of detaching the more moderate Whigs from the Opposition, and of thereby strengthening his own Ministry. Negotiations were accordingly opened up with the nominal head of the party, the Duke of Portland; but little or no progress was made in the matter till after the declaration of war against France in the spring of 1793. Even then the Duke of Portland continued to vacillate, and it was not till July, 1794, that the negotiations were brought to a successful issue by the formal admission of the Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, Earl Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Windham into the Ministry. So

far as Ireland was concerned, this reconstruction of the Ministry, with Portland as Secretary of State for home affairs, was of the utmost importance. For it had been under the auspices of the Duke of Portland that Ireland had secured her legislative independence, and it was well known that his views at this time tended to the adoption of a more liberal line of policy than had of late been pursued under the Administration of Lord Westmorland. Nor was such a policy at all repugnant to Pitt. His conduct towards Ireland had throughout been most generous and most creditable to him. His exertions, however, had been counteracted by the machinations of the Castle clique, and there is no reason to doubt that he would gladly have seen an alteration in that Administration. But he was anxious, above all things, to proceed slowly and cautiously. This, his obligations to the party in power for their conduct on the Regency question made necessary, and he was particularly desirous not to appear ungrateful. He, however, yielded to the representations of the Duke of Portland, and consented to the recall of Westmorland and the appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam as his successor. But the change was to remain in abeyance till some suitable appointment could be found for the retiring Lord Lieutenant.

A rumour of the impending change in the Administration appears to have reached Grattan, in his retirement at Tinnehinch, about the beginning of August, and it was almost immediately after confirmed by a letter from Lord Fitzwilliam himself. This letter appears to me so important, not merely as confirmatory of the views expressed in the previous chapter, but as elucidatory of subsequent events, and of the character of Fitzwilliam himself, that I trust I shall be forgiven for giving it in full. It is dated London, August 23rd, 1794, and begins:—

"Sir, though I have not as yet the honour of an appointment to succeed Lord Westmorland, there certainly is great probability of that event taking place very soon. Trusting that neither my connexions nor my principles are quite unknown to you, it seems almost needless to say, that upon entering upon the administration of affairs in Ireland, I shall look to the system of the Duke of Portland as the model by which I shall regulate the general line of my conduct. The chief objects of my attempts will be to purify, as far as circumstances and prudence will permit, the principles of government, in the hopes of thereby restoring to it that tone and spirit which so happily prevailed formerly, and so much to the dignity as well as the benefit of the country; but it would be vain to hope that any exertions of a Lord Lieutenant could ever effect so desirable an end unless he meets with the concurrence of the most eminent and distinguished characters in this very arduous attempt. It is, Sir, to you and your friends, the Ponsonbys, that I look for assistance in bringing it to bear. Without the hope, which I am vain enough to entertain, of that assistance, I should decline engaging in so hopeless a task as the government of Ireland. It is that assistance which I am therefore now soliciting. I know well the honourable, the useful, the important support Government has received at your hands on many critical occasions, and at different periods; but, except during the momentary administration of the Duke of Portland, I believe that it has so happened that you never have approached the Castle in confidence and avowed friendship; great obstacles have always stood in the way. Should these obstacles be removed, I trust that distance will no longer be necessary, and that I may entertain the hope of seeing you form with the Castle that sort of intimate, direct, and avowed connexion as will render support doubly efficacious."

Now, though it appears to me that Fitzwilliam had clearly grasped the difficulties of the situation, I cannot but admit that the strong expression of opinion in his letter, amounting as it did to a radical and immediate change of policy in regard to Ireland, was highly indiscreet, or at any rate premature. It will appear, as we proceed, that for any such complete and immediate change of system, Pitt had no inclination. His intention was by a conciliatory attitude on the party of Government, to recover the confidence of Parliament,

which the late Administration had forfeited by its persistent opposition to every measure of reform.

While the arrangements were still pending, Grattan arrived in London about the beginning of October. Shortly after his arrival he met Pitt for the first time at a dinner party given by the Duke of Portland. Nothing of importance was transacted; indeed at this time it seemed as if the whole arrangement would fall to the ground. Influenced, perhaps, by Grattan and the Ponsonbys, the Duke of Portland demanded that the Marquis of Westmorland should be immediately recalled, and that the Lord Chancellor, FitzGibbon, should be dismissed. To these demands Pitt declined to accede.

"I do not see," he wrote to Dundas, on October 14th, "that any progress is made towards settling the business on the terms in which I ought to acquiesce. I am fully determined that I will not give way either to Lord Westmorland's recall without a proper situation for him here, or to Lord FitzGibbon's removal on any terms. But though I cannot determine otherwise, it is dreadful that anything like personal considerations (though in fact they are not all so) should seem to mix at such a crisis as this."

At this juncture, just when the newly-formed alliance showed signs of breaking up, Pitt had an interview with Grattan. What passed on this occasion we do not know; but something can be gleaned from a letter from Windham to Pitt on the same day.

"I," he wrote, "have likewise talked with Mr. Grattan since his conversation with you, and I had hoped for some opening of better prospects. A very little would, I am persuaded, content them—I mean Mr. Grattan and his friends—if the matter could be fairly brought as a question of their moderation. What might give an unfavourable appearance to Mr. Grattan's conversation was a suspicion in his mind that more was meant than seemed to be declared; that there was an objection to the system more than a tenderness about particular persons. I really believe that if the C[hancellor] could be

given up [Westmorland?] might be saved. But I don't know, nor should I think, that there could be any secret article about that, and any understanding upon the subject would be too delicate and dangerous. If you cannot make up your mind to expose him to the risk, I fear the thing is desperate, and with it, I also fear, any hope of quiet or safety in Ireland. The acquiescence of men in the situation of Grattan and his friends would be an effort of virtue too great to be long continued. I ought not to disguise from you either the probable effects here, great or small: it is proper they should be before you. Though I could say nothing positive about myself till the return of Lord Spencer, yet it does not appear to me that it would be possible for me to stay on the grounds on which the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam would go out, nor do I conceive that Lord Spencer would be, with respect to himself, of a different opinion."

Pitt, however, was inflexible on the subject of Westmorland and FitzGibbon. "The more I consider every part of this unfortunate business," he replied to Windham, "the more I am confirmed in the impossibility of either consenting to the Chancellor's removal, or of having him or any of the supporters of Government, exposed to the risk of the 'new system' (as far as I understand what is meant by that term), and especially one formed without previous communication or concert with the rest of the king's servants here, or with the friends of Government in Ireland." "It appears to me to be directly contrary to the general principles on which our union was formed, and has hitherto subsisted. Painful as the whole subject is, I feel, nevertheless, that it is material to have no part of it liable to be misunderstood."

Not satisfied with this expression of his views, Pitt drew up a memorandum for his own guidance, which is too important, lengthy as it is, not to be noticed. It reads as follows:—

"Much the best event of the present discussions would be some arrangement which avoided Lord Fitzwilliam's going to Ireland. But if satisfaction be given on the other points, it is impossible to put

a negative on his going. If it were right to do so at all, it could only have been done by forming and notifying that determination, as soon as it was fully known, what had been the conduct of the party respecting this business. Not having been done at first, there is no tenable ground on which it can be done now. Even if the decision were still in our power, much as I should wish to avoid his going, I do not think it would be wise to break on that ground. If so, it also follows that facility must be given to any reasonable arrangement. But before Lord Fitzwilliam can go, these four things are indispensable:

"1st. A full explanation that all idea of a new system of measures, or of new principles of government in Ireland, as well as of any separate and exclusive right to conduct the department of Ireland differently from any other in the King's service is disclaimed and relinquished.

"2nd. Complete security that Lord FitzGibbon and all the supporters of Government shall not be displaced on the change, nor while they continue to act fairly in support of such a system as shall be approved here.

"3rd. That a situation shall previously be found for Lord Westmorland such as may show on the face of it that he quits Ireland with his free consent. This can only be from his having a situation in the Cabinet, or one of the great Court offices, or some respectable office which has been held by persons quitting those situations.

"4th. An adequate and liberal provision for Douglas, if the office of Secretary of State is not granted to him. If these points are arranged, and the change of the Lord Lieutenant is settled, Lord Westmorland must be prevailed on not to press his recommendations to the Provostship and Secretary of State."

However much we may regret the tendency here manifested to subordinate the interests of Ireland to considerations of a personal nature, it must be admitted that so far as the negotiations between the two parties were concerned, Pitt could not have expressed his views more precisely and less open to misinterpretation than he did. The suggestion that Fitzwilliam did not know them is too preposterous to call for serious consideration. Certainly Grattan was not mistaken on the subject; for on October 27th he wrote to his friend McCan: "At present all I can say is, that nothing is determined at present, Mr. Pitt don't agree to those extensive powers, which we

were taught to believe the Duke of Portland had. However, I should not be surprised if it were settled well at last, and that Lord Fitzwilliam went over; nor yet would the contrary surprise me. This week will decide." The reference to the "extensive powers" is interesting, and clearly demonstrates that Grattan had been misled by Fitzwilliam's statements contained in his letter of August 23rd. He was now, however, undeceived as to Pitt's intentions, and rather than lose what may well have appeared to him, even in this modified form, a golden opportunity of re-establishing the Irish Government on a sound and healthy basis, he consented to meet Pitt on his own terms. This undoubtedly was the gist of the letter referred to by Henry Grattan, junior, in his Life of his father, from Grattan to Pitt, in which he says that he conceives there has been some mistake as to the immediate appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam, and to his powers in Ireland, and expresses a wish that Pitt and the Duke of Portland would have a conference on the subject. Had Grattan had his own way, he would, from the first, have consented to a change of measures under the old Ministry. But he was constrained by his friends to stipulate for a change of men as well as measures. The result of the interview appears from a letter from Fitzwilliam himself to Grattan, on October 30th. "When the Duke of Portland," he writes, "reported to the Cabinet this morning my acceptance of the Lieutenancy of Ireland (the result of your decision) it met with a hearty approbation. I trust to the sincerity of it, and feel no diffidence of receiving an honourable support from this side the water."

I have been led to dwell upon this subject at considerable, but I hope not disproportionate length, considering that it is one of the most disputed points in Irish

history. For my own part, I have not the slightest doubt that, however Fitzwilliam may have deceived himself in the matter, it was the general opinion amongst Ministers that Grattan, on the part of himself and his friends, and Portland, on the part of Fitzwilliam, had acceded to Pitt's stipulations. The arrangement thus arrived at was correctly reported on December 14th, by Lord Auckland to Mr. Beresford:—

"I understand," he wrote, "very positively and very pointedly that the new Viceroy is *not* to remove any individual from office unless for misbehaviour in office; that Wm. Ponsonby is to be Secretary of State; that Geo. Ponsonby is to be Attorney-General, when the situation is open; that Douglas is to be some way or another provided for; that Mr. Grattan is to be superintendent of Irish politics, but professedly on the disinterested, moderating and conciliatory principle; and that no large or offensive change of measures is to be brought forward."

The retirement of Lord Westmorland was delayed until he could be invested with the office of Master of the Horse. Then and not till then, on December 10th, was Lord Fitzwilliam sworn in before the King, as Lord Lieutenant. A few weeks after he departed for Ireland, and on January 4th, 1795, landed at Dublin.

The news of his appointment had long preceded him, and his advent was looked forward to as the inauguration of a new and brighter epoch in the history of Ireland. Already in the beginning of September, 1794, the *Northern Star* had announced his appointment as probable, and had given currency to the rumour that the first measure of his Administration was to be the complete enfranchisement of the Catholics. The operation of the Convention Act had considerably restricted the right of public assembly, especially by means of delegation; nevertheless, the friends of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary reform managed to hold several assemblies to

consult as to best method for accomplishing their objects. The Catholics were particularly energetic. On December 23rd, 1794, at a numerously attended meeting of the Catholics of Dublin, it was unanimously resolved that a petition should be made to Parliament in the following session, praying for a total repeal of the penal and restrictive laws still affecting the Catholics of Ireland; that Grattan should be requested to present it; and that an Address of congratulation should be presented to Earl Fitzwilliam on his arrival as Lord Lieutenant.

In obedience to his instructions, Fitzwilliam, however, declined to receive the Address until he had time to examine the situation. But a single glance convinced him that the Catholic business was so far on foot that it was practically impossible to withstand it. He therefore consented to receive the Address; but in his answer he endeavoured to keep clear of all specific engagements, though at the same time avoiding everything that could be construed into a rejection of a consideration of the Catholic claims. Meanwhile, in order as he said, "not to cloud the dawn of his Administration," he had ventured in direct violation of the engagements of his party to Pitt to dismiss two Castle officials—the Rt. Hon. John Beresford, Chief Commissioner of the Revenue, the head of the "Beresford faction," or, as he was popularly called on account of his great influence, "the King of Ireland," and a Mr. Cooke. The former he dismissed on the ground of imputed malversation in office, the latter because he was personally offensive. He, however, tried to take the sting out of their dismissals by allowing to them their full salaries as retiring pensions. At the same time he entered into negotiations for the retirement of the Attorney and Solicitor General in order to make room for his friends, the Ponsonbys.

In making these alterations, Fitzwilliam believed he had full power to do what he did. But so far as Beresford was concerned one broad fact, as FitzGibbon said, must damn him for ever. He landed on Sunday evening; the whole of the next day he was confined to his room by indisposition; on Wednesday notice was sent to Beresford of his intended dismissal, so that he had only one day to inquire into the multiplied acts of malversation which he alleged against him. His conduct to say the least was rash in the extreme. The Beresfords were, of course, not slow to take advantage of his mistake, and they were already, before he had been a fortnight in Ireland, speculating on his recall and the downfall of the new Ministry. On January 9th, Beresford communicated his intended dismissal to Lord Auckland and Lord Westmorland, and solicited their influence with Pitt. When the news was communicated to Pitt he was at first incredulous, and hoped there was some mistake in the statement, "because it would be an open breach of a most solemn covenant." At the time his attention was wholly absorbed in the conduct of the war against France; but Lord Auckland imagined, so he wrote to Beresford, that he was intimating to the Duke of Portland that he could not submit to such treatment, and that the King was being brought forward to give a similar intimation.

While the matter remained in this undecided state, Parliament reassembled on January 22nd. On the Treasury Bench sat Grattan, the brothers Ponsonby, Curran, Hardy, and Parnell. The Speech from the Throne went, as Grattan said, to three great objects—the preservation of Europe, the harmony of the present generation, and the education of the future. In moving the Address, he referred in general terms to the

principles that would animate the policy of the Government. The union of all the property of the country in support of the laws, and all the talents in support of the property with measures to redress and to unite, accompanied with a graciousness of manner to the subject that he might feel, not only a privilege under the Government, but a pride in the condition of being a subject, was, he said, an experiment worthy of a wise Government, whose primary object was the prosperity of the country, and whose secondary object was its love. Two days after he presented the petition of the Catholics of Dublin, which was immediately followed by similar petitions from the Catholics in all parts of the kingdom. On February 3rd, he moved that £200,000 should be granted for the purpose of raising men for His Majesty's fleet, and at the same time announced that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would move in Committee that 41,000 men should be raised for the home defence. The announcement elicited a remarkable speech from Sir Lawrence Parsons. The exigency of the times, he said, called for great exertions, stupendous supplies, union of sentiment and arduous support, the greatest steadiness and highest integrity on the part of Administration. He therefore wished to be explicitly informed whether the gentlemen in power were determined to support consistency, and to carry into effect those measures they so repeatedly and so ably proposed when in opposition—whether the repeal of the Convention Act, the abolition of sinecure places, the disqualification of placemen, the reform of Parliament, and an equalisation of commercial benefits were meant to be carried into effect. The effect of Parsons' speech is thus curiously described by FitzGibbon:—

"When the subject was first mentioned by Parsons, I am told occasioned no small consternation on the Treasury Bench. [illegible]

George [Ponsonby] professed his determination to adhere to his principles, not explaining whether he meant his principles as professed from 1781 to 1789, or from 1789 to 1795. Langrishe was put forward to twaddle, and to give time for recollection. Upon deliberation, the great 'Squire' [Grattan] stepped forth, and disdaining to shelter himself behind either set of Brother George's principles, manfully declared that all offices created by Lord Buckingham must and should be abolished, and that the Convention Act should be repealed, inasmuch as he was clearly of opinion that it was a bad declaration of the law."

This announcement gave great satisfaction to the independent members, and the supplies rapidly passed through Committee. On February 12th, Grattan obtained leave to bring in a Bill for the relief of the Catholics, and at the same time gave notice of a motion for the repeal of the Dublin Police Act.

Meanwhile, Beresford's dismissal and the general course of Fitzwilliam's Government formed the subject of long and anxious consultation in the Cabinet. Even his own friends, Portland and Spencer, were obliged to admit that he had exceeded his instructions. On February 9th, Pitt wrote to expostulate with him on the dismissal of Beresford and on the negotiations in regard to the retirement of the Attorney and Solicitor General. This letter, together with one from the Duke of Portland, urging him to keep back the Roman Catholic business, Fitzwilliam received on the 14th. It was only natural that to a man of his exalted and irritable temperament these remonstrances should have proved most unpalatable, and he immediately replied to Pitt in a strain of injured virtue, justifying his conduct in every particular, asserting his rights, and concluding by demanding the ratification of Beresford's dismissal or his own recall. Thus situated, Pitt had no option but to accept the alternative offered, and on February 25th Fitzwilliam announced to

FitzGibbon his determination to retire from the Government the moment he could get the Money Bill and the Mutiny Bill through the two Houses. The rumour of his departure was soon noised abroad throughout the city, and on the following day Sir L. Parsons mentioned the rumour in the House, and begged to know if it was true. He wished to know, he said, if those measures of conciliation which had been promised with so much confidence, and on the faith of which the House had voted £1,700,000, were to be relinquished. If so, the country had been brought to the most awful and alarming crisis in its history. Government, however, respectfully but firmly declined to answer the question; the propriety of which was at once admitted by Parsons, who said he had only been led to put the question out of an overwhelming sense of the great calamity that was impending over the nation. The Catholics of Dublin were equally prompt in taking the alarm. On February 27th, they presented an Address to Grattan, thanking him for his exertions on their behalf, and professing confidence in Fitzwilliam. Grattan, in his reply, said:—

"I conceive the continuance of Lord Fitzwilliam is necessary for the prosperity of this kingdom. His firm integrity is formed to correct, his mild manners to reconcile, and his private example to discountenance, a progress of rapid and vulgar pollution. If he is to retire, I condole with my country—for myself the pangs I should feel on rendering up my small portion of ministerial breath would be little were it not for the gloomy prospects afforded by those dreadful guardians which are likely to succeed. I tremble at the return to power of your old taskmasters—that combination which galled the country with its tyranny, insulted her by its manners, exhausted her by its rapacity, and slandered her by its malice. Should such a combination, once inflamed, as it must be now by the favour of the British Court and by the reprobation of the Irish people, return to power, I have no hesitation to say that they will extinguish Ireland, or Ireland must remove them."

It was soon apparent that the rumour was only too true. On March 2nd, Parsons rose to propose that supplies should be limited to two months. "If," he said, "it should be said that supply having been once granted his motion came too late, he could only answer that the contract having been broken on the one side, he could not see why, in justice, it should not be departed from on the other." His motion was, however, rejected by 146 to 24. Shortly afterwards Parliament adjourned till April 13th. On March 25th, Fitzwilliam left Ireland. The day was one of national mourning. Everywhere throughout Dublin the shops were shut; no business of any kind was transacted; Lord Fitzwilliam's coach was dragged down to the waterside by some of the most respectable citizens, and of the great crowd that witnessed his departure scarcely an eye was dry or a heart free from sickening foreboding as to the future. It is only necessary to add that his recall was made the subject of discussion in the English Parliament. In the House of Lords the defence of Government was undertaken by Lord Mansfield, and in the House of Commons by Pitt. The prerogative of the King to dismiss his Ministers was alleged as the only ground of his recall, and nothing further could be elicited.

In reviewing this melancholy incident, it must be admitted, however much we may lament that the cause of Ireland, of her future peace and prosperity, was put in the same balance as the interests of one or two private individuals, that Fitzwilliam was himself very much the cause of it. His conduct from the very beginning was indiscreet in the extreme. His motives were pure and honest, and his policy would undoubtedly have been attended with the best results for Ireland and the Empire at large; but it was impossible for Pitt, consistently with [redacted]ne of policy he had taken up from the beginning,

and with regard to the unconciliatory attitude adopted by Fitzwilliam, to act otherwise than he did. It is a miserable and a melancholy transaction, but the solution of it is not to be attained by reviling either Pitt or Fitzwilliam. As Grattan himself clearly recognised, the real cause of stumbling lay in the assumption that the English Ministry and not the Irish Parliament had the right to control the Irish Executive.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EVE OF THE REBELLION.

1795–1798.

Appointment of Lord Camden — A *scene* in Parliament — Country drifting towards rebellion—Coercion Bill—United Irishmen intrigue with France—Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act—Grattan's warnings—General Hoche's expedition—"An anemocracy" — General Lake's Proclamation — Grattan denounces coercion—Secedes from Parliament—"Letter to the citizens of Dublin"—Victory of Admiral Duncan off Camperdown — Its effects—Sir Ralph Abercromby's description of the Irish army—Arrest of the Leinster delegates—Outbreak of the Rebellion—Duigenan attacks Grattan—Report of the Committee of the House of Lords—Grattan replies.

FIVE days after the departure of Lord Fitzwilliam, his successor, Lord Camden, arrived in Ireland. On April 13th, Parliament reassembled, and after having voted an address of congratulation to the new Viceroy, adjourned to the 21st. On that day Grattan rose in the House of Commons to move the appointment of a committee to enquire into the state of the nation. The motion afforded him an opportunity to review the circumstances attending the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. Just as the debate was drawing to a close a "scene" occurred. Grattan was at the time replying to certain objections that had been taken to his conduct as tending to inflame the public mind with reference particularly to the answers

he had given to the addresses presented to him by the Catholics. He admitted the charge, he said. He perfectly well remembered the addresses and the answers he had given, and if they had given offence he was quite prepared to meet an inquiry. As for himself, he was there to confront his enemies, and to stand by his country. This last sentence elicited a burst of applause from his supporters, which was taken up by the strangers in the Gallery. A scene of indescribable confusion followed, which lasted for several minutes. When order was at last secured the Speaker directed the Gallery to be cleared, and no one to be admitted without new orders from the Chair. The motion for a committee was then rejected by 158 to 48.

Notwithstanding the ominous prospect, Grattan had every confidence in the ultimate success of the Catholic Emancipation Bill. "It may be death to one viceroy," he said, "it will be the peace-offering of another; and the laurel may be torn from the dead brow of one governor to be craftily converted into the olive for his successor." His hopes were, however, doomed to disappointment. On May 4th, the Bill came before the House of Commons for a second reading. It was immediately opposed by Government, and its rejection with the assistance of those members who only a few weeks before had been fully prepared to vote for it, was soon apparent. But there was no lack of able supporters to the measure. Arthur O'Connor, in particular, made a very brilliant speech, which cost him his seat in the House. About midnight, Grattan rose to reply to the objections that had been urged against the Bill. It was, he said, asserted, and asserted on the authority of the English Ministry, that the exclusion of the Catholics from the House of Commons was necessary to the connection

between the two kingdoms. What! he exclaimed. Did the British Ministry say so? Did they—that Ministry that had lost their country Holland, lost Brabant, lost a great part of Germany, lost the terror of the British name—did they reject the Catholics of Ireland? He supposed they thought it better to buy Prussian faith with English gold, than Irish soldiers with Irish privileges; they thought it better to neglect unanimity against France, and to throw up new dykes and fortifications against the Pope and Pretender! At what did the British Government tremble? At the loss of Holland? No; they had borne that well, very well. The loss of Brabant? No; they had borne that well, very well. The anxious state of the West Indies? No; that, too, they had borne very well. No! but when the proposal was to give Irish subjects constitutional privileges, then the British Ministry trembled. Like the Carthaginian assembly that presided over the ruin of their country, the British Ministry was moved by nothing but by the least of their misfortunes. But, it was said, Catholic Emancipation was incompatible with the monarchy. His Majesty's coronation oath was a bar. Oaths were very serious things. But to make them political pretences was a high crime. To make an obligation, taken for the assurance of liberty, a covenant against it; to impose on conscience a breach of duty; to make the piety of the King the scourge of his people was an attempt atrocious in the extreme. In the same strain of narrow argument it was alleged that to admit the Catholics into the Constitution would endanger the Church. It seemed that religious differences were not enough for some gentlemen, they must also add temporal causes. But this alarm for the Church soon explained itself, and was acknowledged to be an apprehension for the fate of tithes.

Thus the "true profession of the Gospel," and the "Protestant religion" assumed a somewhat grosser aspect, and the divine strain of argument turned out to be after all something very temporal and very mercenary. The advocates for this objection, as they had before exposed the connection and the monarchy in the forefront of the battle; now represented under an affectation of zeal the Church as inconsistent with the liberties of the people. From the Church their error proceeded to the Senate, and it was urged that Parliament would be destroyed by the admission of the Catholics. It was the opinion of these gentlemen that the proper way to preserve Parliament was to sell the peerage and exclude the Catholics, and so reduce the Senate to a synod of the orthodox champions of the minister rather than the representative of the people. To preserve the institution of Parliament, it was proposed to democratise by exclusion Catholic property; to democratise Catholic aristocracy; and thus mass them all in one host of ex-constitutionalists, and on that mass to pour the chalice of invective and vituperation. In opposition to this view he begged to lay it down as absolutely and as broadly as language would permit, that neither the connection, the monarchy, the Church, nor the Parliament was in the slightest danger from Catholic Emancipation; but on the contrary that without it they could not be saved; that it was absolutely necessary for their preservation that the connection, the monarchy, the Church and the Parliament, should be made compatible with the privileges of the people.

After one of the fiercest debates that had ever occurred in the House, the division was taken at ten o'clock on the following morning: 155 for rejecting the Bill and 84 against it. Considering it was made a Government question, the division was very favourable to the Bill,

many of the usual supporters of Government voting for it, and there can be no doubt that had Fitzwilliam and his friends remained in office it would have passed with the greatest ease. As it was, its rejection at this time was attended with the most disastrous consequences. It not merely exasperated the Catholics and added to the strength of the Republicans, but it gave to the measure itself an air of importance which it never really possessed, and which for more than thirty years presented an insurmountable barrier to its concession. After another animated discussion on a motion by Curran, supported by Grattan, to address the Crown on the grievances of the nation, the Session came to a close on June 5th, 1795.

Baneful as was the effect of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall on the Parliament, it was even worse in regard to the country at large. Every prospect of a peaceful and constitutional redress of grievances was at an end, and Ireland rapidly drifted towards rebellion. Nor was it the least deplorable sign of the times that this prospect of open war should have been hailed with satisfaction by a considerable and ever-growing body of the people. Mention has already been made of the origin of the Defenders, and of their avowed desire to submit their grievances to the arbitrament of the sword. The retirement of Fitzwilliam and the rejection of Catholic Emancipation gave great impetus to Defenderism in Leinster, Connaught, and Ulster. As the year went on outrages on life and property increased. Everywhere, even in the neighbourhood of Dublin, the Protestants were despoiled of their arms. In the counties of Leinster, in Roscommon and Longford, the Defenders increased so rapidly that there seemed every prospect of an early and dangerous insurrection. These pro-

ceedings made the Summer Assizes of 1795 remarkable for the number of convictions and capital executions. In Connaught a different method was pursued. The preservation of peace in that province was entrusted to Lord Carhampton, whose proceedings were marked by a promptitude and thoroughness highly commendable in the eyes of the Government, but arbitrary in the extreme, and, so far as the letter of the law was concerned, grossly illegal. Having instituted a general gaol delivery, he shipped off all those he conceived to be in any way addicted to Defenderism to serve on board the English Fleet. In this way nearly 1,300 persons were transported out of Connaught, without even the pretence of a trial.

Meanwhile, in the county of Armagh, the old enemies of the Defenders, the Peep o' Day Boys, had manifested an inclination to take the law into their hands. Elated by the rejection of the Catholic Bill and the violent speeches of Dr. Duigenan and FitzGibbon, now Lord Clare, they entered into association for the defence of Protestantism, which they declared was endanged by the concessions to the Catholics, and out of loyalty to the Prince to whom they conceived they owed the blessings of a Protestant Government and a Protestant Succession, called themselves Orangemen. Mutual recriminations soon led to open hostilities. An affray near Lough Brickland, on the borders of Down and Armagh, and another at the fair of Loughgall, preceded and led to a more general engagement, in the month of September, at a place called the Diamond, near Portadown, when the Defenders were utterly defeated and put to flight. The victory, instead of satisfying, only served still more to inflame the minds of the Orangemen, and a regular persecution of the Catholics in the county was instituted by them. They openly declared that they would not allow a single Papist to remain

in the county. Short and pithy notices were posted up on the cabins of the unfortunate Catholics, ordering them "to hell or Connaught," and appointing a limited time for their removal. If they refused or delayed, their houses were burned over their heads. Within the space of a few weeks, 700 families were compelled to quit their abodes and seek for shelter elsewhere. By the supineness of the magistrates, many of whom were openly charged with abetting the Orangemen, the disorders in Armagh rose to such a height that the Governor, Lord Gosford, was constrained to assemble the magistracy, and compel them to take orders for the suppression of Orangeism.

Nowhere were the poor outcasts of Armagh received with more kindness than by the United Irishmen of Belfast. To them the "Armagh Persecution" came very opportunely. Unable to stand against the strong measures of Government, the original society of United Irishmen had practically disappeared about the close of 1794. But the spirit of liberty still survived, and out of the ashes of the old order there sprang a new society, retaining the old name, but of which the members were bound to one another by an oath of secrecy. The objects of the new society were no longer confined to a reform of Parliament and Catholic Emancipation. The attitude of the Government on these questions had convinced them that a peaceable settlement was out of the question, and that only by a revolution could they secure the blessings of a sound Constitution. As yet, however, the notion of a Republic remained in the back-ground, but the idea of appealing to France for assistance was very early mooted and eagerly adopted. Hitherto the Catholic peasantry had remained aloof from the Republican Independents, but the defeat of Defenderism and the attitude of the Orangemen convinced them that safety could alone

be obtained by amalgamating with the United Irishmen. Nor did the United Irishmen spare any exertions to win over the Catholics to their side. And at last their exertions were favoured with entire success. About the beginning of 1796, the Defenders, by specific votes of their own societies, agreed to be sworn United Irishmen, and incorporated in large bodies into the Union. Meanwhile, Wolfe Tone, the semi-accredited agent of the United Irishmen, was on his way to France for the purpose of arranging an invasion.

On January 21st, 1796, Parliament reassembled. The Speech from the Throne adverted to the seditious and treasonable associations in the country, and after the Address had been passed, Wolfe, the Attorney-General, gave notice that it was the intention of Government to introduce a Bill for the more effectual suppression of disorder in the country, and also another to indemnify certain magistrates and other persons, who had acted for the public good during the recent disturbances, though not exactly in accordance with the letter of the law. Accordingly, on February 20th, he submitted to the House four resolutions declaratory of the disturbed state of the country, and the necessity of giving to the magistrates more effective powers. As these resolutions referred only to the Defenders, Grattan proposed some amendments respecting the proceedings of the Orangemen and the outrages they had committed on the Catholics. As it stood, the proposal of Government, he said, did not go to the whole of the situation of the country; it was a partial description of the outrages that had taken place, and it was a partial remedy. It proposed to suspend the operation of the Constitution, with a view to produce peace, at the same time leaving one great county a prey to violence and insurrection. It left the families of Armagh,

whom a violent mob and a supine magistracy had caused to abandon their dwellings, without any certainty of redress. His amendments were, however, rejected, as was also a subsequent motion to recommit the Bill, when finding all opposition to it fruitless, he allowed the Insurrection Bill, or as Curran called it, the "Bloody Code," to pass without a division. Not so Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the only dissentient on that occasion. Nothing, he declared, would ever induce him to give his assent to it. The disturbances of the country were not to be remedied by any coercive measures, however strong; nothing, he was convinced, would ever restore peace but a serious and candid endeavour on the part of Government and Parliament to redress the grievance of the people. No remedial measures were, however, proposed, and on April 15th, Parliament was prorogued.

Meanwhile, by the exertions of Wolfe Tone, the French Government had been induced to consent to a scheme for the invasion and conquest of Ireland. The arrangements hung fire for some time, and it was not till December that the expedition was ready to sail from Brest.

Long before that time rumours of the intended invasion had reached the ears of Government, and on October 13th, Parliament was called together to take steps for the defence of the country. After adverting to these circumstances, Lord Camden congratulated Parliament on the results of the vigorous measures of the preceding session, and on the success that had attended the arms of the King's ally, the Emperor of Austria, but at the same time intimated that it had been deemed advisable to open up negotiations for a peace with France. The Speech afforded Grattan an opportunity for making a vigorous attack on the foreign

and domestic policy of Pitt's Ministry. He was delighted, he said, to hear that the Minister had sent an ambassador to Paris to apply for peace, partly because he deemed the Minister incapable of conducting the war, and partly because, so far as Ireland was concerned, a peace was greatly to be desired. In the beginning Ministers had boasted that the present war would be brief and glorious. In the first year the French took Austrian Flanders, and drove the English off the Continent. In the third they took Holland, and now Italy, and both banks of the Rhine in the fourth year of this brilliant and brief war, which still continued, but with this difference—that England, instead of being at the head of a confederacy stood almost alone, and France without being in need of a confederacy, stood at the head of a confederacy composed of the old allies of England—the Dutch and the Spaniard. But Ministers had not confined themselves to one prophecy or one assurance. The minutes of the debates were scribbled over with monstrous tales of a similar sort. Even on the finances, where they were more at home, the fallacy was only more superb and magnificent. They had been guilty of the crime of inducing their country to continue the war by a false confidence in French bankruptcy. Year after year they had stated that France was on the verge of bankruptcy, till the last year, when they pronounced her to be in the gulf. From that gulf there had issued five armies; while poor England, with a group of dupes, her Ministers, prophets, and financiers, standing as it were on the rock of public credit to see the fulfilling of her Ministers' predictions and enjoy the shipwreck of her enemies, saw her allies dispersed, her funds—that old vanity—down drop, fathom after fathom, like a falling devil, until they tumbled below that point of depression

which some of her Administration had stated as the misery and reproach of the Ministry of the American war. Such was their foreign policy; what about their domestic? What their conduct to Ireland—the greatest if not the last card of the Empire? The region this, the country and walk of the Lords of Buckingham and Westmorland and of the old Court for ages of peculation and plunder. Here they had begun their system by giving the Administration of the Government to the opposers of the Constitution; here they had attempted to take back that Constitution by certain commercial propositions; here they had withdrawn the proferred trade and swindled the revenue; here they had sold the Peerage to buy the Commons. They had scolded the people from the bar of the House of Commons; they had kicked their prayers after them; they had instructed grand juries to publish denunciations against the Catholics; they had then taken up the cause of the Catholics; they had then resumed the Protestant ascendancy; again they had taken up the Catholics, and again they had let them down; they had, in the progress of their defeat, promised a change of Ministers and measures; they got a great supply, recalled the Ministers for making the promises under their own authority, and told the Catholics, whom they had deceived, that they must for ever remain disqualified for seats in Parliament and offices in the State, for the better securing the Crown and the connection. The people petitioned; they answered their petitions by fencibles. The army they had withdrawn when the French threatened the country, they poured in when the people petitioned the Crown. The leading Catholics who had assisted in planning the petition to His Majesty they had prosecuted without colour or pretence for high treason; the lower orders of Catholics they gave up to an armed mob to be

exterminated by violence. Such had been their home policy—a policy of influence, of coercion, and proscription. Their foreign policy had brought invasion to the door; their home policy had destroyed that zeal and warmth of heart necessary to meet and repel the enemy. He therefore begged to move as an amendment, that the best and most effectual measure for supporting the Crown, and for calling forth the real strength and spirit of the country, was to unite the people in a common interest by adopting such measures and passing such laws as should communicate to all alike the blessings and franchises of the Constitution without distinction of religion. The amendment was, however, rejected by 149 to 12.

The rapidly decreasing number of his supporters having elicited a remark from one of the ascendency party that he was at the close of his political career, he retorted: "He was told that he was at the close of his political life. He would borrow a few moments of that life to repeat the sentiment and reassert a claim dear to his heart, however reduced his numbers, however solitary his phalanx;" and he accordingly gave notice that he would again move the question of Catholic Emancipation. The day following the debate on the Speech the Attorney-General moved the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. It was, undoubtedly, a very strong measure, considering the favourable tone of the Speech from the Throne, and was fiercely combated by Grattan. "You," he said, addressing the Government, "have deprived the subject of his political liberty, and you now deprive him of his civil liberty, lest he should exercise that liberty to reform abuses, lest he should use the liberty he has left in order to recover the liberty he has lost. You have gone from bad to worse; from corruption to coercion, from the Bills of last session to this Bill." Never-

theless, the suspension of the Act was carried by 137 to 7.

A day or two afterwards, Grattan fulfilled his promise of making a fresh attempt on behalf of the Catholics, and moved that the admissibility of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion to seats in Parliament was consistent with the safety of the Crown and the connection of Ireland with Great Britain. He had nothing new to urge on behalf of a measure already so thoroughly debated and so transparently self-evident; but it was fiercely resisted by the ascendency party, with Dr. Duigenan at their head, who stigmatised it as a wicked, dangerous and seditious proposition. It was rather with a feeling of sorrow than of anger that Grattan rose to reply, "I am sorry," he said, addressing the Treasury Bench, "I cannot go along with you. I know not whither you are leading me, from one strong Bill to another, until I see a gulf before me, at whose abyss I recoil. In it I see no safety, nothing but the absence of our dearest rights; the absence of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; the absence of civil liberty." The Ministers of the Crown seemed to have resorted to the Constitution only to dig up its foundations in order to pelt and overwhelm the people with the ruins of their own inheritance. Every session they had to come to Parliament for new Acts of power, thereby confessing the futility of their plans of coercion and proscription. Nothing remained to complete their system but the introduction of a Scotch or English army to enslave utterly and entirely the people of Ireland. Perhaps, if the business had to be begun again, Ministers would adopt a different policy. There was still time; it was not even then too late to recover the confidence of the country by the adoption of such plans of conciliation as would place their strength upon a less paradoxical

security than the enthusiastic exertions of a proscribed people, and the gratuitous eleemosynary success of an interdicted and an insulted community.

But his warnings fell on listless ears, and the suspension of the Act was carried by 137 to 7. Perhaps, indeed, it was even then too late for Government to recover the confidence of the country; for already were heard the first low mutterings of the coming Rebellion. On December 18th, General Hoche, with 15,975 soldiers and large stores of arms and ammunition, sailed from Brest. Safely avoiding the English men-of-war at the mouth of the harbour, the fleet encountered a severe storm in the Channel, which scattered it in all directions. Seven ships of the line, however, managed to make Bantry Bay with Wolfe Tone on board, but the General was missing; and after lying at anchor several days, but meeting with no encouragement from the country people, Admiral Bouvet deemed it advisable to return to Brest, where he arrived on the last day of the year.

The army of invasion had come and gone, but the people had manifested no inclination to support it; on the contrary, they had shown themselves most zealous in providing for the defence of the country, and there is no doubt that had the French effected a landing the Catholic peasantry to a man would have opposed them. This result, so different from what might naturally have been expected, was attributed to the inaction of the United Irishmen, and the inaction of the United Irishmen in turn attributed to a false communication, which had reached the Irish Directory shortly before the sailing of the expedition, to the effect that it had been postponed for some months. The United Irishmen were thus thrown off their guard; but there can be no doubt that had Admiral Bouvet been able, as Tone desired, to land his

men in the neighbourhood of Belfast, the affair would have assumed a very different complexion. To this fortuitous circumstance, and to the co-operation of the winds and waves alone, did Ireland owe her safety. Notwithstanding the ample warning Government had, not a single step had been taken to prevent the landing of the enemy, or to resist him when he stepped ashore. Everything had been left to accident. When Parliament met on January 16th, 1797, Grattan strongly censured Ministers for their neglect in taking proper precautions for the defence of the country; but a motion he made on the subject was rejected by 90 to 7. A proposal by Sir Lawrence Parsons some days afterwards, to raise 50,000 yeomen, shared a similar fate.

Nevertheless, the expedition was not without its effect on the country. Failure though it was, it clearly demonstrated the sincerity of the French Government, and inspired the more ardent Republicans with a hope that the next attempt would be more successful. The country, and particularly Ulster, remained in a very unsettled state. During the months of December, January, and February, it was found necessary to proclaim several counties under the Insurrection Act. Large bodies of troops from England were poured into the country. The gaols soon overflowed with persons arrested on suspicion of treason; spies and informers swarmed in all quarters. Nevertheless, the people were not quieted. Riot, disorder, and excess of all sorts on the one side kept pace with arrest and incarceration on the other. The seizure of arms still continued; subscriptions were raised to support the families of imprisoned offenders, to fee eminent lawyers, and to bribe witnesses. The magistrates were assaulted, their houses broken into, and everywhere put in terror of their lives. During the day large bodies of

men used to assemble either to attend funerals or under pretence of attending them, when an empty coffin would be exhibited, containing, it was said, "Betty Bigotry," whereby they meant to signify the union between the Protestants and Catholics and the burial of old religious feuds. Unable to control these excesses, Government authorised General Lake to place the whole of Ulster under military control.

The Proclamation of General Lake was immediately brought under the notice of Parliament by Grattan, who asked if it had been issued with the sanction of Government. The question was at first evaded by Secretary Pelham; but on being pressed, Lord Camden, on March 18th, sent down a message stating that he had authorized the measure. On the 20th the House resolved itself into Committee to take into consideration the message of the Lord Lieutenant; whereupon Grattan observed that of all the bad news he had heard of late, the worst was the message of the Lord Lieutenant, attainting one entire province of high treason. For what cause was Ulster put under military execution? Ministers said for high treason and sedition. But the same Ministers would have stigmatised the Claim of Right in 1780, the meeting at Dungannon and some of the best and most constitutional exertions of the country as treason. Was a desire to reform Parliament also treason? Then he was himself a traitor. It was said there were in some parts of the north disaffected societies. He did not deny the statement; but had hon. members inquired how far the misconduct of Government had been the cause of them? He believed there was throughout the country very great dissatisfaction. But the measures of Government had caused it, and he predicted that every new violence on the part of the Government would produce new dis-

content on the part of the people. The present measure —the Proclamation of General Lake, he considered to be especially calculated to spread through the province of Ulster more discontent, more resentment, and more feuds than ever.

"Away," he exclaimed, "with the system of coercion—the Jacobinical system. What is the Jacobinical system? It is a contempt for human rights, and a violent encroachment on the laws. What has been our system of coercion but a violent outrage on the laws; it has been law-making in the spirit of law-breaking; until now, indeed, our Government finds that such an idea of law-making is too slow and limited for their rapid views, and therefore they resort to law-breaking in its own true name, without even the affectation of law-making. Believe me, this will not do; neither legal tyranny, nor military execution. Why do you resort to military execution now? Because legal tyranny has failed; because coercion by Act of Parliament will not be tolerated by the people of Ireland. You passed a Gunpowder Bill; what did you get by it? Strength and tranquillity? no; general discontent. That Bill was to have quieted everything; the value of land was to have risen upon it; every man's title was said to have been strengthened by it. That Bill, however, failed; and because it failed you resorted to a more powerful measure. What was that measure? Transporting the peasantry without judge or jury. What did this measure produce? Much more discontent. You passed to another—an Indemnity Bill for those who had broken the law to quiet the country. You passed to another measure—an Insurrection Bill. It deprived the subject in proclaimed districts of his liberty; but it was to be peace and composure, and liberty was said to be wisely sacrificed for security. What was the consequence of this Bill? Much more disturbance and discontent; and because this Bill had failed, another Bill more powerful was resorted to—the Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. This was the great measure to quiet everything; accordingly, numbers were arrested—the middling men, who is more one of the people, and therefore whose imprisonment was most likely to affect the people, were disposed of in gaols; individuals in vast numbers were arrested. Now, surely everything must at least be quiet, though not free. What is the fact? A message comes from the Lord Lieutenant stating the whole province of Ulster to be in a state of rebellion. I do not inquire into the principle of these Acts of Parliament and these acts of power; indeed, they are now nearly the same thing. I inquire into their policy; and you must perceive the

stronger you grow in the statute-book, the weaker you grow in the country; the more devoted your majorities, the more averse your people; the more penal laws you obtained, the more disturbance you enacted; the more liberties you destroyed, the more power you lost; the more you hang, and the more you transport, the more you inflame, disturb and disaffect; the more you ruin the Constitution, the more you undermine the Government; and now having completed your system, which is nothing less than a statute-war waged against the people, the Minister comes to Parliament and honestly owns that his system of coercion law will not do; that law in any possible form will not do, and that military execution in place of law is now the only thing, on their principles, to secure the peace and happiness of Ireland."

His resolution deprecating General Lake's Proclamation was, however, rejected by 127 to 16. But on May 17th, just as if for the very purpose of emphasising his argument, came a fresh Proclamation, giving express orders to the military officers to use their utmost exertions for the suppression of treason without waiting for any authority from the civil power. There is not the slightest doubt that the Proclamation was a gross misuse of power, and as such was pretty generally condemned, not only in Ireland but also in England; fortunately it was as absurd as it was wicked, and it remained practically a dead letter; but not before it occasioned many outrages on the peasantry and introduced a spirit of insubordination amongst the soldiers, highly detrimental to their effectiveness as a military body.

Though with little prospect of success before them, the Opposition nevertheless determined, before the dissolution of Parliament, to make one more effort on behalf of conciliation. Shortly after the failure of the French expedition, and when every prospect of establishing a Republican form of Government seemed for the time at an end, an influential meeting of United Irishmen was held in Belfast, when resolutions in favour of a

Parliamentary reform was passed. Their moderation on this occasion seemed highly commendable to the leaders of the Opposition, particularly to George Ponsonby, who conceived the notion of combining the cause of the United Irishmen with that of the Opposition, and of directing their agitation into a more constitutional channel. It was accordingly for some time a matter of serious consideration whether it would not be advisable to enter into direct communication with the leaders of the United Irish party. Eventually, however, Grattan gave his voice against the scheme on the ground that it might furnish the enemies of reform with a handle against the constitutional party in the House. Perhaps he was too cautious in the matter; but it is certain that nothing would have given Lord FitzGibbon and his party greater satisfaction than to have entangled Grattan in the meshes of a seditious agitation. His constitutional attitude on all occasions and his condemnation of Government for breaking the law had greatly exasperated them, and as the event showed they did not hesitate to stoop to the meanest artifices to inveigle him into a violent course of conduct.

Accordingly, when on May 15th, Ponsonby laid before the House his proposal for reform, he did so without any reference to the Belfast resolutions. As the debate was drawing to a close, Grattan rose to reply to arguments brought against the plan. Gentlemen, he said, had urged that the present was no time to reform Parliament; the people, they had said, must be subdued before they could be relieved. Did gentlemen really understand what the subjugation of the people meant? Suppose Government succeeded in subduing the people, what was the success? A military Government, a perfect despotism, a hapless victory over the principles of a

mild Constitution, to end in union and ultimately in separation. For his own part he concluded that Parliamentary reform was not merely eligible at that time, but absolutely indispensable for the security of the Constitution.

"I speak," he said, "without asperity; I speak without resentment; I speak perhaps my delusion, but it is my heartfelt conviction; I speak my apprehension for the immediate state of our liberty, and for the ultimate state of the Empire. I see, or imagine I see, in this system everything which is dangerous to both. I hope I am mistaken; at least I hope I exaggerate—possibly I may. If so, I shall acknowledge my error with more satisfaction than is usual in the acknowledgment of error. I cannot, however, banish from my memory the lesson of the American war; and yet at that time the English Government was at the head of Europe, and was possessed of resources comparatively unbroken; if that lesson has no effect on Ministers, surely I can suggest nothing that will. We have offered you our measure, you will reject it: we deprecate yours; you will persevere. Having no hopes left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more, and after this day shall not attend the House of Commons."

The speech was delivered in a quiet and subdued fashion, very different from his old animated style, and it is easy to see how profoundly he was depressed by the situation of affairs. As he anticipated, Ponsonby's motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority, and nothing remained for him but to retire. Parliament continued to sit till June, when it was prorogued and shortly afterwards dissolved; but so far as the nation was concerned all interest in its proceedings vanished with the secession of the Opposition. Neither Grattan nor his colleague, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, allowed themselves to be put in nomination, and at the election the court party swept the country. The policy of seceding has often been canvassed, and while holding to the opinion that Grattan ought to have remained at his post to the last, I cannot

refuse to allow that from his point of view secession was the only alternative that lay before him. One thing only remained to be done—to vindicate the conduct of the Opposition to the country. This Grattan did in his celebrated "Letter to the Citizens of Dublin," which was in effect a review of the history of Ireland so far as it related to Parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation, and an attempt to throw the onus of the present crisis on the shoulders of the Government. It was a concise and well-written pamphlet, and greatly exasperated Government against him. This done, and suffering considerably both in body and mind from the exertions of the session, he retired for a season to Castle Connell, on the banks of the Shannon, a place remarkable for the salubrity of its waters.

As Grattan predicted, General Lake's proclamation of Ulster entirely failed to give peace to Ireland. Instead, it only served to increase the discontent already existing in that province, and to add greatly to the strength of the United Irishmen. Their organisation was now almost complete, and nothing was wanting but the presence of the French to induce the whole North to rise in rebellion. Accordingly, about the end of May, 1797, directly after the rejection of Ponsonby's motion for a Parliamentary Reform, an earnest appeal for assistance was made by the Irish Directory to the French Government. Nor was the appeal in vain. Already, when Lewines, their ambassador arrived on the Continent, about the middle of June, he found vast preparations for an invasion being made at Brest and Texel, under the direction of Generals Hoche and Daendels. The time was most opportune. The mutiny of the sailors at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and the Nore, had completely paralysed the action of the English fleet; the sea was open, and it would

have been the easiest thing in the world to throw an invading force into Ireland. So Lewines and Wolfe Tone argued, and they earnestly pressed for the dispatch of a small body of troops and a large supply of arms and ammunition, without waiting until the whole invading force was ready to sail. The news from Ireland added weight to their argument. The strong measures of Government, together with the burnings and plunderings which everywhere attended the course of the military, were rapidly driving the people into a state of utter desperation, and there was every prospect that, unless the French speedily appeared, a premature rising, or an unconditional surrender to Government, would completely blast the hopes of the Republicans. Their representations were, however, ineffectual. The Batavian Republic, inflated with the notion of recovering the naval supremacy of the Dutch, and of sweeping England off the seas, refused to move until their fleet was fully equipped. When the day arrived the wind, which had up to that time been favourable, chopped round, and so continued till the beginning of October. When at last the expedition was allowed to sail, it found the English fully prepared, and the magnificent victory of Admiral Duncan off Camperdown placed the invasion of Ireland for the nonce, at any rate, out of the question.

Meanwhile, the Irish Government were congratulating themselves on the complete success that had attended their policy of coercion. An abortive insurrection in county Down had been promptly suppressed, and, under the terror inspired by the military, and despairing of foreign assistance, a considerable number of United Irishmen, taking advantage of an amnesty offered them, had laid down their arms, and taken the oath of allegiance. Flushed by their successes, and by the news of Admiral

Duncan's victory, the Orangemen and the military were guilty of the most barbarous excesses towards the Catholic peasantry. It almost passes the credulity of human nature to believe the plunderings, burnings, torturings, that were committed by these religious fanatics under the pretence of supporting the law. On November 22nd, 1797, Lord Moira made a desperate attempt, in the English House of Lords, to enlist the intervention of the English Parliament to put an end to these scenes of needless cruelty. Before God and his country he solemnly protested he had seen in Ireland the most absurd, as well as the most disgusting tyranny that any nation ever groaned under, openly practised. He had seen religious differences fomented on set purpose. He had seen English troops poured into the country, every man of which seemed inspired with the intensest hatred against the Irish. No rank or degree could save a Catholic from the grossest insults. He had known a man, in order to extract confession of a supposed crime, or that of some of his neighbours, picqueted till he actually fainted; picqueted a second time till he fainted again, and, as soon as he came to himself, picqueted a third time until he once more fainted—and all upon mere suspicion. He had known men taken and hanged till they were half dead, and then threatened with a repetition of that cruel treatment unless they made confession of their imputed guilt. Nor were these the acts of particular cruelty exercised by men abusing the power committed to them; they formed a part of the system of Irish government—and that in a country which was as devoid of crime as London. Lord Moira's interference, though ineffectual, was much resented by the Irish Government, and particularly by Lord Clare; but it ought to be noted that in all the debates in the Irish Parliament there was no attempt made to contradict the very grave

charge which he had brought against the conduct of the army. On the contrary, by their attempts to palliate that charge the gentlemen on the Treasury Bench practically admitted the truth of it. That there had been excesses they fully admitted, but, however much these might be deplored, they were, after all, only the natural effusions of a loyal army in a rebel country. Some innocent persons might perhaps have suffered along with the guilty; if so, the courts of law were open to them. Considering who were the aggressors and who the aggrieved, the reply was remarkable only for its unblushing cynicism.

But though neither the English nor the Irish Parliament would lift a finger to prevent the continuance of these brutalities, the resignation of Lord Carhampton in November, and the appointment of Sir Ralph Abercromby as Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Army, was by many persons construed into an expression of distrust on the part of Pitt and the Duke of Portland as to the line of policy which the Irish Government were pursuing. Whether this was really the case, or whether Sir Ralph's appointment was merely due to a desire to put the defence of Ireland into more efficient hands, is a moot point. Perhaps both causes co-operated; anyhow, there are few passages in Irish history more instructive as to the general administration of affairs than the brief tenure by Sir Ralph Abercromby of the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Army. Arrived in Ireland early in December, he immediately directed his attention to the general defence of the country. In the execution of this duty he was much struck by the complete political incapacity of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Camden, who seemed to have become a mere tool in the hands of Lord Clare; the intense hatred of the Government towards the Catholics and the United Irishmen; and the utter

demoralisation of the Army. On the first two points he very prudently said as little as possible, but it is quite clear from what he did say that the persons he regarded as chiefly responsible for the situation of the country, owing to the violence of their conduct, were the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Clare, Speaker Foster, the Right Hon. John Beresford, Primate Agar, and the little knot of Castle officials, who together constituted the Government. As for the Army, no words were strong enough to express his contempt for it.

"Within these last twelve months," he wrote, in February, 1798, "every crime, every cruelty, that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks, has been transacted here. . . . . Within less than two months since the issuing of my orders, a private man has thrown a chair at the Colonel of his regiment, when sent for to be reprimanded. Houses have been burned, men murdered and others half hanged; a young lady has been carried off by a detachment of dragoons, and in the room where she was an officer was shot through the thigh and a blunderbuss snapped at another gentleman's head."

Clearly perceiving that the state of the Army was such as to render it formidable to every one but the enemy, he endeavoured, by the enforcement of stricter discipline, and by restraining the employment of the military to cases with which the law was inadequate to cope, to introduce some degree of order and efficiency into the Army.

His conduct, and particularly his refusal to comply with the proclamation of May 18th, 1797, authorising the military to act on their own responsibility, raised against him the indignation of "the Castle," especially that of Lord Clare, who could never mention him without some such opprobious epithet as "Scotch beast" or "sulky mule." Finding it quite impossible under the circumstances to perform his duty, he placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Camden, who at once accepted it. His resignation was immediately followed by the entire

reversal of his conciliatory policy, and by a return to the old methods of coercion. Early in April, Lord Camden and his Cabinet saw fit to proclaim the kingdom in a state of rebellion, at a time when, as Sir Ralph stated, his Excellency's orders might have been carried over the whole kingdom by an orderly dragoon, or a writ executed without any difficulty, a few places in the mountains excepted. It is due to the English Cabinet to say that the treatment Sir Ralph Abercromby had received in Ireland was deeply resented by them; unfortunately their relations with the Irish Executive were such as to render any effective intervention on their part impossible.

Meanwhile, though much disappointed by the victory of Admiral Duncan, the leaders of the United Irish party continued to persist in their plans of rebellion. Relying on the discontent which the arbitrary proceedings of the Government had created, and which was now no longer confined to the north, they determined not to wait for the support of France, but to institute a national insurrection. A military committee was accordingly appointed to arrange the details of the rising, which was definitely fixed for May 23rd, 1798. At the same time, a most pressing despatch was prepared for the French Directory. The conspiracy had already made considerable progress, when, by the treachery of one of their associates, Thomas Reynolds, a silk-mercer, the whole plot was revealed to the Government. In consequence of his information, fourteen of the Leinster delegates, forming the Provincial Committee, including Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. Mac Neven, and Oliver Bond, were on March 12th arrested in Dublin. Warrants were at the same time issued for the arrest of Councillor Sampson and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The former was captured some weeks afterwards

at Whitehaven; the latter, however, managed to escape. The papers of the committee disclosed the whole extent of the conspiracy, and, after a close examination of the prisoners, the Privy Council ordered the Castle to be put in a state of defence, augmented the military force in the city, and on March 30th issued a proclamation stating that a traitorous conspiracy, manifesting itself in acts of open rebellion, had been discovered, and that in consequence thereof the most direct and positive orders had been issued to the officers of His Majesty's forces to employ them with the utmost vigour and decision for the immediate suppression of the conspiracy, and for the disarming of all rebels and disaffected persons by the most summary and effectual measures. Thus did Government inaugurate what was known as the Irish Reign of Terror. The conspiracy, nevertheless, still went on. Immediately after the arrest of their leaders a new Directory was formed, and strong measures taken to counteract any bad effects which the arrest might have had. But on the very eve of the insurrection the conspiracy was again betrayed. The arrest of the brothers John and Henry Shears on May 21st was speedily followed by that of Samuel Neilson, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and the chiefs of the new Directory on the 23rd.

During these melancholy times preceding the outburst of the Rebellion, Grattan remained at Tinnehinch, a silent but not uninterested spectator of the course of events. He had done what he could to avert the catastrophe, which he had long foreseen to be impending over the nation. His warnings, his appeals, and his denunciations, had alike been despised, and the country was now paying the penalty for the sins and follies of its rulers. For the Government and the United Irishmen equally, he felt the most profound disgust. He could

play neither the part of a fool nor a knave, and having said his say he could only wait, as patiently as his nature would allow him, the issue of events. Unfortunately such a position was hardly possible considering the active part he had hitherto played in the political life of the country. Rightly or wrongly there was a pretty general feeling amongst the members of the Government, owing to the strong expressions of opinion contained in his "Letter to the Citizens of Dublin," that his relations with the United Irishmen were more intimate than openly appeared. Shortly after the arrest of the first Directory in March, rumours reached him that his own life was no longer secure, and that the Government were trying to draw him into the meshes of the conspiracy. He was of course inclined to treat such rumours with the contempt they deserved; but the matter assumed a more serious complexion when a relative of Mrs. Grattan, Mr. Stevenson Blackwood, afterwards Lord Dufferin, came purposely to Tinnehinch and represented to her that it would be advisable to get her husband out of the country as quickly as possible, as he was watched and the times were very dangerous. Conscious, however, of his own innocence, and disdaining to yield to those he had so often faced in the House of Commons, Grattan stubbornly refused to seek safety by flight. Fortunately an event just then occurred, which compelled him to go to England, otherwise there can be no doubt that he would have remained at Tinnehinch to the end. About the end of February, Arthur O'Connor, the same whose speech on the Catholic question had attracted considerable attention, was arrested at Margate on a charge of treason, when about to escape to France. O'Connor's relations with the United Irish party were not at that time known, and as he was intimately acquainted with the chiefs of

the Whig party both in England and Ireland, they readily responded to his request to bear witness on his behalf at his trial which took place at Maidstone on Monday, May 21st, 1798. In order therefore, to give evidence in behalf of one whom he regarded as the victim of an unfounded charge, Grattan crossed over into England some time about the beginning of May.

Shortly after his departure the Rebellion broke out. Everywhere, except in the county of Wexford, the insurrection proved a miserable fiasco. The conduct of the troops fully justified everything that Sir Ralph Abercromby had alleged to their discredit. Wholly inefficient as soldiers, they degenerated into mere banditti. For a long time victory and defeat hung in the balance. A march on Dublin by the rebels, which had all but been successful, filled the Government with the liveliest sense of their danger, and the most urgent appeals were made to England for assistance. Meanwhile, the counties of Wexford and Wicklow, the theatre of the insurrection, presented a scene of the most frightful and indescribable confusion. Here the Catholic peasantry, brutalised by a century of tyranny and oppression, were gratifying their hatred of the English in acts of the most revolting barbarity. Here the Orangemen, without the same excuse, but inspired by the intensest religious hatred, were stimulating the soldiery, and emulating them in the most ferocious attacks on the Roman Catholics. Neutrality was quite impossible. Scores of quiet and respectable families abandoned their homes and took refuge in other parts of the kingdom, or even fled to England for safety.

For some time after her husband's departure, Mrs. Grattan remained alone at Tinnehinch. The people behaved very badly towards her and frightened her very

much. Nor were the yeomanry, mainly composed of Orangemen, any better. Some of them tried to exact money from her by professing to have proofs of her husband's complicity with the rebels; others stole her horses; while others, out of pure maliciousness, destroyed her garden and chopped down an entire orchard of trees. "At length," she says, in the account which she wrote of her experiences at this time, "Stevenson Blackwood came again—his kindness I can never forget. He told me it was necessary I should pretend to be ill and go to Bath, and keep Mr. Grattan with me, for if he returned he certainly would be put to death." Very likely her relative purposely exaggerated the danger; but there can be no doubt that, owing to certain "disclosures" about this time, by a spy named Hughes, implicating Grattan in the conspiracy of the United Irishmen, his arrival in Ireland would probably have been attended with considerable inconvenience to him. For some time Mrs. Grattan refused to leave Tinnehinch; but the disturbances increasing, owing to the arrival in the neighbourhood of the "Ancient Britons," a regiment of fencibles, commanded by Sir Watkin Wynne, and notorious for its licentiousness and brutality, she felt compelled to abandon Tinnehinch to its fate, and, having with some difficulty secured passports, she crossed the Channel. At Holyhead she was met by Grattan, and together they took up their abode at Llanrwst, in North Wales, intending to remain there till the storm had blown over.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNION.

1798-1801.

Scheme of a legislative Union revived—Pitt's view of the situation of Ireland—Views of Lord Cornwallis—Lord Clare advocates a "Protestant Union"—Difficulties of Government—Parliament rejects the scheme—Dismissals—Castlereagh's plan for carrying the Union—Activity of the Opposition—Cornwallis's tour of inspection—Grattan returned for the borough of Wicklow—Last session of the Irish Parliament—Opposition to the Union increases—Debates in Parliament—Duel between Grattan and Corry—Ponsonby's motion for a dissolution rejected—Union Bill passed—Boroughs Compensation Bill—Tranquillity of the country—Question of Catholic Emancipation—Resignation of Pitt—The question indefinitely postponed—Historical review of the Union.

MEANWHILE, torn asunder by civil dissensions, Ireland presented a most pitiful spectacle. Like a ship with an intoxicated and infuriated crew on board, buffeted hither and thither by the winds and waves, she seemed to English politicians to be rapidly drifting to her dissolution. There was no concealing the fact that her nominal governors were utterly incapable either of managing the State or of controlling their own passions. They had, as Grattan said, proved themselves to be a miserable and impotent faction. Even Pitt, who might have been expected to regard their conduct more leniently, had to confess that a return to the old system was quite out of the question. There seemed to him one way and

one way only out of the difficulty—a legislative Union between the two countries. The idea of a Union was by no means a novel one. At different times since the Union between Scotland and England, it had been mooted as a possible solution of the Irish question. The unwillingness of England had, however, at first presented an obstacle to it, and the recognition of Irish independence in 1782 had seemed for ever to have disposed of the question: and though the idea had, as we have already noticed, suggested itself to Pitt's mind in 1793, as a thing much to be desired, he had been so impressed by its utter impracticability that nothing more had been said on the subject. But when the Rebellion broke out the idea recurred to him as not only feasible but even necessary in order to save Ireland from herself. Irishmen, he thought, might not be unwilling to exchange their theoretical independence for the peace and prosperity which the Union offered.

On June 4th, 1798, while the Rebellion was at its height, he wrote to Lord Auckland, who stood on confidential terms with the Members of the Irish and English Governments, "Lord Granville and I have had a good deal of discussion lately on the subject of following the termination of the present crisis in Ireland by immediate steps for a Union . . . we think we see daylight in almost everything but what relates to the trade and revenue." By Auckland, the scheme was confidentially communicated to Lord Clare, who replied:

"As to the subject of a union with the British Parliament, I have long been of opinion that nothing short of it can save this country. I stated this opinion very strongly to Mr. Pitt in the year 1793, immediately after that fatal mistake into which he was betrayed by Mr. Burke and Mr. Dundas, in receiving an appeal from the Irish Parliament by a popish democracy. I again stated the same opinion to him in the last winter; and if this were a time for it, I think I

could make it clear and plain to every dispassionate man in the British Empire that it is utterly impossible to preserve this country to the British Crown if we are to depend upon the precarious bond of union which now subsists between Great Britain and Ireland."

Having thus as it were felt the pulse of Administration on the subject, Pitt took the first and most necessary step towards the accomplishment of his design by recalling Lord Camden and placing the Government of the country in the hands of Lord Cornwallis, who had cordially acquiesced in the scheme, and whose integrity, moderation and tact in carrying it out fully justified the confidence reposed in him by Pitt.

Hardly, however, was the subject of the union broached outside the official circle than it instantly raised a storm of opposition. The lawyers were the first to take the alarm, and at a meeting of the Bar on September 9th, a motion declaring the Union to be "an innovation, dangerous and improper to propose at the present juncture," was carried with almost absolute unanimity. Even amongst officials there was a considerable divergence of feeling on the subject, which only became more pronounced as negotiations proceeded. Lord Cornwallis, who regarded the scheme not as a mere political expedient, but as a great and statesmanlike design for the pacification of Ireland and the welding together of the Empire, was anxious that it should be conducted on the broadest and most generous lines, and that, in order to this, the Catholics should be admitted on an equality with the Protestants.

"I certainly wish," he wrote to Pitt, "that England could now make a union with the Irish nation, instead of making it with a party in Ireland; and although I agree with those who assert that the Catholics will not be immediately converted into good subjects, yet I am sanguine enough to hope, after the most plausible and most popular of their greivances is removed (and especially if it could be

accompanied by some regulation about tithes), that we should get time to breathe, and at least check the rapid progress of discontent and disaffection."

On the other hand, Lord Clare was vehemently opposed to any further concession to the Catholics. The whole mischief of the situation he traced to the former concessions, and though friendly to a Union, he was determined that it should only be a Protestant Union. Unfortunately for Ireland, his narrow prejudices eventually triumphed over the wise and conciliatory policy of Lord Cornwallis. On October 8th, he departed for England in order to impress his view of the situation on Pitt. On his arrival he found the English Ministry fully alive to the critical situation of "our damnable country," as he described it to Lord Castlereagh, but as full as ever of their Popish projects. He flattered himself, however, that he had convinced Pitt of the impolicy of admitting the Catholics, and he hoped he would be able to keep his colleagues firm on that point. A letter from Elliot, another Irish official, to Lord Castlereagh, on October 24th, throws some additional light on the views of the British Ministry at this time.

"It has never, I understand," he wrote, "been in contemplation to put any restrictions on the power of the Legislature with respect to the future consideration of the Catholic claims; but the leaning of the opinion of the Cabinet is against extending the privileges of the Catholic body at the present juncture. This sentiment appears to be partly the result of the embarrassment which, it is feared, might accrue from a proposition to alter the Test Laws in England, and partly to proceed from the difficulty which it is thought the Government here would experience in opposing the prejudices of its Protestant friends in Ireland. The latter is the argument which, I believe, has been chiefly relied on by Lord Clare; and, I plainly perceive, it has operated powerfully on Mr. Pitt's mind. Mr. Pitt, however, says that his judgment is not yet formed on the subject, and that some months ago it was favourable to the pretensions of the Catholics."

Outside the Castle the leaders of public opinion, with the exception of the lawyers, were very reticent in expressing an opinion on the subject; but, on the whole, Cornwallis reported to Portland on November 27th, there appeared to be no general repugnance to the scheme, and a disposition to consider the question coolly. The principal opposition he expected would be confined to Dublin, "the rather, as the fears of decay, incident to a metropolis, will be much excited by the activity of the Bar." To Major-General Ross he spoke his mind more freely:

"My time," he wrote, on November 23rd, "has lately been much taken up with seeing and breaking to the principal persons here the projected Union, and when you send for a man on such business, he must stay with you and talk with you as long as he likes. I have no great doubts of being able to carry the measure here, but I have great apprehensions of the inefficacy of it after it is carried, and I do not think it would have been much more difficult to have included the Catholics. Those who are called principal persons here are men who have been raised into consequence only by having the entire disposal of the patronage of the Crown in return for their undertaking the management of the country, because the Lords Lieutenants were too idle or too incapable to manage it themselves. They are detested by everybody but their immediate followers, and have no influence but what is founded on the grossest corruption."

While exerting themselves to their utmost to secure the support of "the principal persons," there is nothing more conspicuous in the official correspondence at this time than the evident desire of Government to promote discussion on the subject. Firmly believing in the efficacy of the Union, they had no doubt that, when the people came to understand it, a just appreciation of the benefits likely to follow from it would eventually triumph over local and national prejudices. For this purpose a sketch of the projected scheme was widely disseminated throughout the kingdom, together with a pamphlet by Cooke, the Under-Secretary, entitled "Arguments for and against an Union

between Great Britain and Ireland considered." The example set by Government was promptly imitated, and before the end of December it was calculated that no fewer than thirty pamphlets bearing on the question were published in Ireland. Unfortunately the discussion was not attended with those good effects the Government had anticipated. As the year drew to a close, there is a remarkable change of tone noticeable in Cornwallis's letters. Opposition to the Union he found was rapidly growing in and about Dublin; the lawyers, the bankers, and merchants were all most vehement against it. The news from the north, epecially about Belfast, was not so favourable as formerly. The Catholics were undecided; but it seemed probable that a considerable number would join the Opposition. But the clamour, though exceedingly violent, had not, it appeared to Cornwallis on December 24th, reached, or at least affected, the lower orders of the people "who hate both the British Government and their Irish rulers, but the latter, I believe, with more acrimony."

Parliament, which had continued to sit during the Rebellion and had only been prorogued on October 6th, reassembled on January 22nd, 1799. Its proceedings were watched with the greatest interest. In a long speech from the Throne, Lord Cornwallis adverted to the unremitting attacks made by France to effect a separation of Great Britain from Ireland, and expressed his anxious hope that this consideration, joined to sentiments of mutual affection and common interest, might dispose the Parliaments in both kingdoms to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving a connection essential to their common security, and of consolidating, as far as possible, into one firm lasting fabric the strength, the power, and the resources of the British Empire. An Address of approval having been moved

and seconded, George Ponsonby, the Leader of the Opposition, proposed an amendment to the effect that the House would be ready to enter into the consideration of any measure, short of a surrender of their free, resident, and independent Legislature, as established in 1782. This produced a debate which lasted till one o'clock p.m. on the following day, when the House divided, 107 for and 105 against the Address. Upon the question being run so close, Ponsonby proposed fixing an early day for a debate on the principle of the Union; but Castlereagh, who was much disappointed at the result of the division, thought it prudent to inform the House that under the circumstances he would not press the measure further at that time. Being called upon to explain whether he meant that he would not renew it that Session, he declined to pledge himself, but at the same time he thought it right to state that the Government had made up their mind unalterably on the subject, as the only means of securing peace for Ireland and strengthening the bonds of the Empire.

Indeed, it was not long before they gave the most unequivocal signs that neither stoppage of supplies, nor any other violence, could alter their ultimate intention. All those who had opposed the measure, including several highly placed officials, were dismissed from their posts, and their places supplied by more obsequious servants. Those who were accessible to bribes were bribed, not, indeed, with money, but with promises of peerages and offices. It was a despicable piece of business, and particularly hateful to Cornwallis. At the same time, every means was taken to render the scheme more palatable to those who were chiefly interested in opposing it. Lord Castlereagh calculated that the interests involved amounted to £1,433,000, which he boldly proposed to purchase.

The Duke of Portland, to whom the scheme was submitted, while assenting to the principle of it, thought that the value of the interests had been considerably overestimated. The intention of the Ministry was, he declared, to take the county representation, as being the most free from corruption, as the basis of the new scheme. Out of the hundred members returned to the Imperial Parliament sixty-four would be county members. The county interests, amounting to £224,000, would, therefore, not be touched. The borough interests would, of course, be consulted; but he was of opinion that the sum at which they had been estimated, viz., £756,000, was above the mark. As for the other interests concerned—the barristers, the purchasers of seats, and the individuals connected with the city of Dublin, amounting to £475,000—he thought there was no necessity to consider them from a pecuniary point of view. The selection of boroughs, destined to be disfranchised, was for the present postponed; but the arrangement eventually arrived at proved generally satisfactory.

Meanwhile, the Opposition were not idle. In the Speaker, whose line of conduct had at first been so doubtful, that Pitt had thought it more than likely that his support might be secured by the promise of a peerage and a pension for life, they found a most valuable ally. But not content with acting merely on the defensive, they endeavoured to weaken the argument on behalf of the Union, by preparing to bring in a Bill for setting at rest the difficulties raised by the Regency Question. Overtures were at the same time made to the Catholics, who as yet remained neutral, and a promise of Catholic Emancipation and a settlement of tithes was held out to them as an inducement to throw in their lot against the Government.

These manœuvres did not escape the notice of Corn-

wallis, and he again raised his voice in behalf of a liberal policy towards the Catholics. But to his request the Duke of Portland returned a most decided negative.

"The more I consider that proposition," he wrote, on January 29th, 1799, "the more I am convinced that it never ought to be attempted unless a Union takes place. . . . . Catholic Emancipation cannot be attempted with safety to the persons of either persuasion, but through the medium of a Union, and by means of a united Parliament. Nor do I hesitate to add that, for the sake of the professors of both religions, I hope it will not be one of the first acts of that Parliament."

Nevertheless, the measures taken by Government had not proved ineffectual. About the middle of June, Cornwallis calculated that the supporters of the Union had increased from 149 to 165, and that the necessary majority had therefore been obtained. This result was of course chiefly due to the influence exerted on the borough holders, and the inducements offered them in the shape of places and promotions. In the beginning of August the Lord Lieutenant made a tour of inspection through the south of Ireland, where he was much impressed by the general good disposition of the people towards the Government, and the cordial approbation of Catholics and Protestants alike towards the Union. A similar tour through the north, in October, was attended with equally good results. He was much struck by the friendly attitude of the more wealthy Roman Catholics and could only deplore the uncompromising attitude of the British Ministry towards them. The mass of the people, however, as it seemed to him, did not care one farthing about the Union, and were equally hostile to the Government and the Opposition.

During all this time Grattan remained in England, stricken down by a serious illness. The news from Ireland and the attack on the Constitution, of which he

justly regarded himself the founder, and for which he had almost a parental affection, alarmed and agitated him so much that his physicians forbade him to read the newspapers. As time went on, and desertion thinned the ranks of the Anti-Unionists, his friends earnestly entreated him to return to his place in Parliament. "Oh, why," he exclaimed, in the bitterness of despair, "will they not allow me to die in peace!" Overcome by their prayers, and the entreaties of his wife, he returned to Ireland about the end of 1799, in order to dedicate the remainder of his days to the service of his country. Some little difficulty was at first experienced in obtaining a seat for him, and Parliament had already assembled when he was returned for the borough of Wicklow at a cost of £1200.

On January 15th, 1800, the Irish Parliament met for its last session. It was opened by a long Speech from the Throne without any reference to the Union, it being the intention of Government to reserve that question for a special message. Opposition, however, determined to force the hand of Government on this point, and an amendment to the Address expressive of the intention of Parliament to maintain the Constitution as established in 1782, was moved by Sir Lawrence Parsons.

The debate was already beginning to draw to a close, when shortly after seven o'clock in the morning the House was electrified by the entrance of Grattan, who advanced slowly, supported by W. B. Ponsonby, and Arthur Moore, amid the solemn and profound silence of the assembly, to take the oath. His emaciated appearance, bearing evidence of intense suffering, touched the hearts of all who beheld him. Having taken his seat, he waited till Mr. Egan had finished speaking, when he rose to address the House, but his strength failing him,

he obtained permission to speak sitting. For an hour and a half he continued to hold forth in defence of the Constitution of 1782. He declined to admit that the Regency Question and the war with France were a sufficient reason for the subversion of a Constitution under which Ireland had prospered. That Parliaments could, and did, sometimes err, he fully admitted. He himself had seceded from the former Parliament, because he condemned its proceedings. But he did not, like the Minister, argue from the misconduct of one Parliament to the being of Parliament itself. On the contrary, he affirmed that the blessings procured by the Irish Parliament during the preceding twenty years were greater than all the blessings afforded by British Parliaments during the century—greater even than all the mischiefs inflicted on Ireland by British Parliaments—greater than all the blessings procured by those Parliaments for their own country within that period. It was an easy thing to destroy.

"The edifices of the mind, like the fabrics of marble, require an age to build, but ask only minutes to precipitate; and as the fall of both is an effort of no time, so neither is it a business of any strength; a pick-axe and a common labourer will do the one—a little lawyer, a little pimp, a wicked minister, the other."

In that Babel which he had constructed, and which he called a Union, the Minister, by excluding the Catholics from participation in it, had overlooked the people, just as by ignoring the physical situation of Ireland he had overlooked the sea—that eternal protest against Separation and Union alike.

"He takes one hundred members, many of whom are removed by the nature of their election from the influence of representation; all of whom by removal from their country are withdrawn from that of sympathy, from that of opinion. He changes the sphere, not only of their action, but of their character and of their sensations. How came the Irish Parliament, with all its borough members, in 1779, to

demand a free trade—in 1782, to demand a free Constitution? Because it sat in Ireland; because they sat in their own country; and because at that time they had a country; because, however influenced as many of its members were by places, however uninfluenced as many of its members were by popular representation, yet were they influenced by Irish sympathy. They did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame upon them; they did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy. . . . . I will not say that one hundred Irish gentlemen will act ill where any man would act well; but never was there a situation in which they had so much temptation to act ill, and so little to act well; great expense and consequent distresses; no support from the voice of an Irish public; no check; they will be in situation a sort of gentlemen of the empire; that is to say, gentlemen at large, absent from one country, and unelected by the other—suspended between both, and belonging to neither. The sagacious English Secretary of State has foretold this: 'What advantage,' says he, 'will it be to the talents of Ireland, this opportunity in the British empire thus opened?' This is what we dread. The market of St. Stephen opened to the individual, and the talents of the country, like its property, dragged from the kingdom of Ireland to be sold in London. These men, from their situation (man is the child of situation)—their native honour may struggle—but from their situation they will be adventurers of the most expensive kind; adventurers with pretensions, dressed and sold, as it were, in the shrouds and grave-clothes of the Irish Parliament, and playing for hire their tricks on her tomb, the only repository the minister will allow to an Irish Constitution, the image of degradation, and the representatives of nothing."

After a rather sharp reply from Corry, who had succeeded Parnell as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the House divided at ten a.m.—96 for the amendment, and 138 against it: majority against, 42. The vigour of Grattan's speech had much astonished and delighted his old friends; but Government were of opinion that his re-appearance had been on the whole beneficial to the Union. Between the rough and honest patriotism of Grattan, fearlessly denouncing those whom he believed to be enemies to his country, and the artificial and selfish opposition of those who fought simply because their personal interests were at stake, there was no real sympathy. "In short," wrote

Castlereagh, "his coming into Parliament has been of singular advantage to us, as it has disgusted to a degree the most respectable of our opponents."

Nevertheless, the Opposition seemed to be recovering their lost ground. Several desertions occurred on the side of the Government, and Cornwallis noted with alarm that an appeal was being made to the yeomanry, who amounted to 60,000 men, chiefly Orangemen, to stand by the country. It seemed that the question would, after all, have to be settled by the sword, and a pressing demand was made for more troops from England. "The clamour against the Union," wrote Cornwallis to Major-General Ross, on January 31st, "is increasing rapidly. . . . The Roman Catholics, for whom I have not been able to obtain the smallest token of favour, are joining the standard of Opposition."

Nevertheless, Government showed no signs of hesitancy. On February 5th, a message from the Lord Lieutenant, commending the Union to their serious consideration, was delivered to the House of Commons by Lord Castlereagh. On this occasion Grattan confined his argument to prove the incapacity of the Irish Parliament to surrender its independence. Parliament, he declared, was in the position of a trustee, and like every trustee without a power to transfer or hand over its trust. It was appointed, entrusted, created, and ordained, not only to exercise the legislative powers of the society, but also to preserve her rights, and instead of abolishing them by surrendering them to another country, to return them at stated periods unimpaired, undiminished, to the people from whom it received them.

Grattan's argument is specious, but it is extremely doubtful whether an appeal to the country, to which it evidently pointed, would have been attended with any

material alteration in the relative position of parties in the House. The bulk of the people did not care one farthing about the Union. They had not at that time learned to associate their social grievances with any particular political system, and would willingly have given their consent to any scheme which promised to render life a little more agreeable and a little less burdensome to them. But, however this may have been, the House, after a fierce debate, divided on the motion to take into consideration the message of the Lord Lieutenant—ayes, 160; noes, 117. It was the crucial vote on the question, and it was remarked to be the largest division ever known, there being only twenty-two members absent out of a House of three hundred. Castlereagh, who had calculated on a larger majority, was much disappointed, while the Opposition were stimulated to fresh exertions to win over any who were still open to persuasion.

On February 14th, the House of Commons went into Committee on the particular terms of the Union. On the first proposition, that the kingdoms be united, Isaac Corry, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that the Union measure took its rise in the imperfections of the Constitution of 1782, and in the course of his remarks commented on the inflammatory conduct of certain men of education and property, alluding particularly to Grattan, from whose Letter to the citizens of Dublin he quoted, as having been one of the chief causes of the recent Rebellion. While he was dwelling on this point, Grattan entered the House, and, after Corry had finished, he rose to reply. In his speech, which was in a light and bantering strain, he twitted the right honourable gentleman with endeavouring to supply his deficiency of ability and reasoning by personal satire. Whereupon Corry rose in a great heat, and very unwisely renewed his attack on

Grattan, raking up all the old charges of complicity with the United Irishmen against him. Grattan's reply was the most powerful piece of invective ever heard in the House.

"The right hon. gentleman says I fled from the country after exciting rebellion, and that I have returned to raise another. No such thing. The charge is false. The civil war had not commenced when I left the kingdom; and I could not have returned without taking a part. On the one side there was the camp of the rebel; on the other, the camp of the minister, a greater traitor than that rebel. The stronghold of the Constitution was nowhere to be found. I agree that the rebel who rises against the Government should have suffered; but I missed on the scaffold the right honourable gentleman. . . . . I think now as I thought then, that the treason of the minister against the liberties of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people against the minister. I have returned, not as the right honourable member has said, to raise another storm; I have returned to discharge an honourable debt of gratitude to my country, that conferred a great reward for past services, which, I am proud to say, was not greater than my desert. I have returned to protect that Constitution, of which I was the parent and the founder, from the assassination of such men as the honourable gentleman and his unworthy associates. They are corrupt; they are seditious; and they, at this very moment, are in a conspiracy against their country. I have returned to refute a libel, as false as it is malicious, given to the public under the appellation of a Report of the Committee of the Lords. Here I stand, ready for impeachment or trial: I dare accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman; I defy the Government; I defy their whole phalanx: let them come forth. I tell the ministers I will neither give them quarter nor take it. I am here to lay the shattered remains of my constitution on the floor of this House in defence of the liberties of my country."

Corry's answer was a challenge.

At daybreak the parties adjourned to the Phœnix Park. On his way thither, Grattan was cheered by the people, and at the meeting which followed he had the good fortune to wound his opponent in the arm. The wound was not very serious, but the duel, besides increasing Grattan's popularity, exercised a very salutary

effect on the more vehement supporters of Government. Nevertheless, after a debate of twenty hours, the first proposition, "that a Legislative Union of the two kingdoms was desirable," was carried by 46. It was not till March 19th that the remaining resolutions passed through Committee. The Opposition, consisting of 120 members, thirty-seven of whom represented counties, and many of them men of the first weight and talent in the House, made a fierce and determined stand against the measure. They lost no opportunity of strengthening themselves in the country, and Castlereagh was obliged to admit that the petitions against the Union were more numerously signed than the addresses and declarations in favour of it, though the preponderance of property appeared to him undoubtedly on the side of the latter.

On March 4th, George Ponsonby moved an Address to His Majesty, praying him to dissolve Parliament and submit the question to a new one. He based his argument on the corrupt practices of which the Government had been guilty in order to secure a majority. Since the close of the last session no less than sixty-three members had vacated their seats by accepting the escheatorship of Munster, a nominal office similar to the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds, in order to make way for Government nominees. He declared that the voice of the country was decidedly against the Union, as the petitions from twenty-six counties and the principal cities and towns bore witness. It was a desperate motion, and I do not think that it would have been attended with any beneficial result. Government had made up their mind to carry the Union. But Sir Lawrence Parsons accurately estimated the effect which their refusal to dissolve would have on the minds of posterity. "Posterity," he said, "would never believe that the measure was sanctioned

by the public approbation if the proposal of the right honourable gentleman was rejected." The proposal was met by a motion for the adjournment, which was carried by a majority of 48. On March 19th, the resolutions passed through Committee, and on the motion to report them to the House, Grattan again rose to protest against the scheme, which he declared was a breach of trust on the part of Parliament, and a breach of faith on the part of the British Minister. It was, he said, argued that the Union was a measure for identifying the two nations; but he would remind them that it was impossible to identify or bind together two peoples by the mere operation of parchment or paper: the will of the parties was essential to marriage, whether national or personal. Between the buyer and the bought, between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the conqueror and the conquered, there could be no identification. The Union, forced against the sense of the people by terror and by money, would be an act of oppression, of purchase, and of conquest. The promoters of the scheme declared that it would promote tranquillity. It was a shallow and senseless thought, that by getting rid of Parliament the Minister would also get rid of opposition. He marvelled to hear gentlemen argue that when there was no Irish Parliament in which to agitate Irish grievances, that Irish grievances would cease to exist. Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, would these questions cease to exist? No, all of Ireland's grievances would be agitated in the Imperial Parliament; but they would be agitated without hope of redress.

"You will be taught by the debates of the Imperial Parliament that you have grievances, and you will be further taught by the abortive consequences of those debates that you have no Parliament to redress them. You will find that to deprive a nation of hope is not

the best method to prevent her becoming desperate; and that you least of all secure the peace of your country by taking away that Constitution which that country has pledged herself to support."

He besought them not to scandalise their own professions, to renounce their own achievements, and to close a political life of seven hundred years by one monstrous, self-surrendering, self-debasing act of relinquishment, irretrievable, irrecoverable, flagitious, and abominable. Let them rather supplicate that Power who had favoured them for seven hundred years with the rights and image of a free government, and who had lately conducted them out of that desert where for a century they had wandered, that He would not desert them, but would be pleased to permit their beloved Constitution to remain a little longer among them, and interpose His mercy between the stroke of death and the liberties of the people. It was a most touching and eloquent conclusion to a most powerful and animated address, but it had no effect on the House, and the motion was lost by 112 to 134.

After that the Leaders of the Opposition held a meeting at Lord Charlemont's house, on March 21st, when it was resolved not to risk a division on carrying the Report to the Lords; that the chief members of the party should not appear on that occasion, but that the rank and file should, if they chose, make whatever protest they pleased against the measure. The real fight was over; on March 27th, the Peers gave their assent to the resolutions, and they were immediately transmitted to England for approbation.

After an adjournment of six weeks, the Irish House of Commons reassembled on May 8th, 1800, and a day or two afterwards Lord Castlereagh moved for leave to bring in the Union Bill. There was no opposition. Pitt's firmness in resisting any material alteration in the resolutions during their passage through the English

Parliament had greatly strengthened the hands of the Government in Ireland, and deprived any of their more doubtful supporters from changing sides, as some of them seemed inclined to do had the opportunity been afforded them.

On May 26th, the Bill was read a second time, and on the motion for its committal, Grattan rose to protest against it for the last time. He rehearsed all the arguments he had before urged against it; denounced the means by which it had been carried; and prophesied its ultimate failure and repeal.

"The Constitution," he concluded, "may be for a time so lost; the character of the country cannot be lost. The Ministers of the Crown will, or may perhaps, at length find that it is not so easy to put down for ever an ancient and respectable nation, by abilities however great, and by powers and by corruption however irresistible: liberty may repair her golden beams, and with redoubled heat animate the country: the cry of loyalty will not long continue against the principles of liberty. Loyalty is a noble, a judicious, and a capacious principle; but in these countries loyalty, distinct from liberty, is corruption, not loyalty. The cry of the connection will not, in the end, avail against the principles of liberty. Connection is a wise and a profound policy; but connection without an Irish Parliament, is connection without its own principle, without analogy of condition, without the pride of honour that should attend it, is innovation, is peril, is subjugation—not connection. The cry of disaffection will not, in the end, avail against the principles of liberty. Identification is a solid and imperial maxim; but, without union of hearts, with a separate government, and without a separate Parliament, identification is extinction, is dishonour, is conquest, not identification. Yet I do not give up the country: I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead: though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty—

> 'Thou art not conquered: beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
> And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.'

While a plank of the vessel sticks together, I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his flimsy sail, and carry the light bark of his

faith with every new breath of wind, I will remain anchored here with fidelity to the fortunes of my country, faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fate."

Grattan's denunciation of the Union, and his prediction of its ultimate failure and repeal, greatly enraged Lord Castlereagh, and it was with difficulty that he was restrained by his friends from sending him a challenge. After a fierce debate, the motion for the committal of the Bill was carried by 118 to 73, and a subsequent motion by Grattan, that it should be committed on September 1st, rejected by 124 to 87. On the motion that the Bill be engrossed, there was some further ebullition of feeling; one gentleman's indignation leading him to propose, as a counter resolution, that it should be burned by the common hangman. The fight was over. The Bill, incorporating the two kingdoms in a Legislative Union, passed rapidly through the House of Lords; it was approved by the English Parliament, and on August 1st, 1800, it received the Royal Assent.

One measure only remained for the Irish Parliament to give its consent to before it terminated its existence—the Boroughs Compensation Bill. According to this Bill, it was determined to compensate the owner of any disfranchised borough by a sum of £15,000: Commissioners were appointed to carry the provisions of the Bill into execution, and the total sum awarded by them amounted to £1,260,000. So far as the nation was concerned, the business was at an end; but to Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh the winding-up of the engagements incurred in carrying it proved more vexatious and tormenting than any of the former part of the business.

But amid all his troubles, Cornwallis was rewarded for the moderate and conciliatory attitude of his govern-

ment by the profound peace of the country. On the day (August 2nd) when he proclaimed the Union, not a single act of violence occurred even in the metropolis, where the most terrible riots had been predicted. The people looked on good humouredly, quietly waiting the issue of events. "There he is;" "that's he," remarked one citizen to another, as the Lord Lieutenant drove through the streets; "God bless him," replied his neighbour. After two years' military government it was a remarkable testimony, creditable alike to Cornwallis and the Irish people. Indeed, of all those concerned in carrying the Union, no man escaped with hands less smirched than did Cornwallis. It would have been well for Ireland, well for England also, had her governors always been men of a similar stamp. His very success in the arduous task in which he had been engaged is, in my opinion, overwhelming proof that the Union might have been avoided.

But now that it was an accomplished fact it behoved Government to take the only step which could give solidity and stability to it. Lord Cornwallis had always advocated a cordial recognition of the Catholic claims. He was anxious above all things that the Union between England and Ireland should be made with the Irish nation and not with a mere sect. For his own part he would have preferred to have carried Catholic Emancipation and Legislative Union at the same time. Unfortunately his representations had been overruled, and in a moment of weakness Pitt had yielded to the prejudices of the Protestant ascendency party. Nevertheless, Cornwallis seems to have been full of confidence that Catholic Emancipation would be the first act of the Imperial Parliament. Pressed by him Pitt, in September, 1800, brought the subject before the

Cabinet. It is unnecessary to describe how he was betrayed by his colleagues or how Lord Loughborough, seizing the opportunity to intrigue, adroitly inflamed the mind of the King against the measure; sufficient to remark that when Pitt communicated his plan of Catholic relief, the King was already engaged in a negotiation with Addington for the formation of a new Ministry.

Nothing of course remained for him but to resign, and immediately he had made up his mind in this respect, he authorised Lord Castlereagh to inform Lord Cornwallis of his wish, that—

"His Excellency, without bringing forward the King's name, should make the Catholics feel that an obstacle, which the King's Ministers could not surmount, precluded them from bringing forward the question whilst in office; that their attachment to the question was such that they felt it impossible to continue in Administration under the impossibility of proposing it with the necessary concurrence, and that they retired from the King's service considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to the ultimate success of the measure."

A communication to this effect was accordingly made to Lord Fingal and Dr. Troy, the Roman Catholic primate, and by them in turn to the principal Catholics in the kingdom. But the event was correctly estimated by Lord Cornwallis. The question of Catholic Emancipation must now, he said, sleep, as any person who should attempt to bring it forward would be certain to be accused of wishing either to kill or distract the King. Thirty years almost had to elapse before this measure, which Cornwallis rightly regarded as the complement of the Act of Union, and without which the Union, he declared, would prove inefficacious, became law. By that time a new generation had sprung up that knew not the times that preceded the Union, but had learnt to regard the Union as the source and origin of all their grievances.

In considering the Union from a historical standpoint of view, there are three aspects of it which naturally attract attention: (1) the necessity for it; (2) the means by which it was carried; (3) the consequences of it. As to the first, the necessity for the Union, I shall have written to little purpose if I have left my opinion on that point obscure. Primarily the Union took its origin in the inadequacy of the Constitution of 1782. So far as Ireland was concerned the acknowledgment by the English Parliament of her independence, without a reform of the Legislature, was a mere sham and a delusion. Grattan liked to attribute the Act of Independence to the patriotism of the Irish Parliament; but the real authors of it were the Volunteers. This is indisputable, and is the key to the whole situation. The Irish Parliament was notoriously corrupt and notoriously ignorant. But this fact Grattan refused to recognise until it was too late. It was a fatal blunder and left Ireland at the mercy of an irresponsible executive, whose interests were anti-national, and who took a pride in subserviency to England. Instead of sweeping away the Castle as a reformed and national Parliament would have done, it allowed the Castle to remain; it was recruited with the ablest and most unscrupulous men, and ended by establishing itself as the Government of the country. Blind to every interest except their own; tenacious of their own privileges; the leaders of a noisy and intolerant faction, they resisted every moderate scheme of reform, at a time when it was of the utmost consequence to strengthen the frame of the Constitution, and ended by plunging the nation into a civil war. Then, when the mischief was done, they clamoured for English intervention, and immolated their country as a sacrifice for their own crimes. In a word, the occasion for the Union was the

Rebellion, but the authors of the Rebellion were not the Defenders or the United Irishmen or the Catholics, but Lord Clare, Speaker Foster, Archbishop Agar, the Beresford faction, and the corrupt majority in Parliament. Much censure has been heaped on the head of Pitt, for his share in the transaction. But after a careful consideration of the facts, I must confess that, with the exception of his action in the matter of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, Pitt's conduct appears to me to have been not only blameless but highly commendable. His policy towards Ireland was not indeed marked by the warmth and geniality of his rival Fox's, but it was enlightened and conciliatory, and had it not been opposed and thwarted by the Irish Government would in all likelihood have pacified the country and have obviated the necessity for a Union. Situated as he was, with a war on his hands which imperilled the very existence of the Empire and demanding unanimity at home and a vigorous policy abroad, with Ireland misgoverned by a fierce and impotent faction and torn asunder by intestine broils, it is difficult to see what other course he could have pursued. To have suppressed the Rebellion, and to have re-established the old state of affairs, would only have intensified the misery of Ireland. Bad as has been the government of Ireland since the Union, it has seldom equalled in ferocity and incapacity that of Lord Clare and his associates. One alternative there was, but it may be doubted whether any man could have been found sufficiently courageous to have carried it out. Even in 1798 it might have been possible to have done what Lord Fitzwilliam attempted in 1795; but the situation of Ireland in 1798 was very different from what it had been three years previously. Protestants and Catholics, forgetting their feud, might have consented to join hands for the common

weal; but it would have been a long and laborious process, unsuccessful, perhaps, in the end. While sympathising fully with Grattan, and the little knot of honest and incorruptible patriots who gathered round him, at the annihilation of the Constitution they had helped to found, and in which they took such pride, I must confess that I coincide with Abercromby and Cornwallis, in believing that a Union with England was, under the circumstances, the best policy that could have been adopted. Whether the time might not come when it would be beneficial to restore to Ireland her Constitution, is another, and I think quite an open question.

Leaving this point to consider the means by which the Union was carried into effect, it seems to me that much unnecessary heat has been expended on the subject. That a majority in the Irish Parliament was obtained for the Union by purchase, by places, pensions, peerages, and compensation for suppressed seats, there is not the slightest doubt. The transaction was a bargain; but it was a bargain made in the open market. The means employed were objectionable, but they were all open and above-board; and it ought to be remembered that so far as the suppressed boroughs were concerned, those proprietors who opposed the Union were treated on the same scale as those who supported it. No one who has thoroughly appreciated the corrupt nature of the Irish Parliament, can read of its destruction without admitting that it had received its just doom. For the bulk of those who opposed the Union, as for those who supported it, I have not the slightest sympathy. It was hard, very hard, that men like Grattan, of pure and unsullied patriotism, should be involved in the fate of such men as John Foster; and one can only hope that, should ever the occasion again arise when Irishmen shall be intrusted with the government of their

own country, that they will recognise the fact that their own interests are best consulted when they consult the welfare of their fellow subjects, without distinction of creed.

Whether the Union has justified the sanguine expectations of its promoters is a question too closely bearing on present-day politics to admit of a full discussion here. Has the Union made Ireland happier and more tranquil? Has it contributed to the stability and strength of the Empire? These are questions which must be answered by each man for himself; and on his answer will depend the justification or condemnation of that measure. It may, however, be permitted to point out that the Union, as it was carried, was not the scheme that had received the approbation of the men whose names are chiefly connected with it. In the opinion of Pitt and Cornwallis, and particularly of the latter, Catholic Emancipation was essentially necessary to make the Union a reality. Without it, and without a radical reform of the executive government, the Union was a great political blunder; it was a union not of nations, but of parties. It did nothing more than destroy the Irish Legislature—a measure as senseless as it was futile, for no body of men could have shown themselves more devoted to the interests of England and the welfare of the Empire than had the Irish Parliament. It was urged that its incorporation with that of Great Britain would render a concession of the Catholic demands both easier and safer. But did it? For thirty years those demands were systematically rejected by the Imperial Parliament. The consequence was most disastrous. Denied any participation in the benefits of the Union, the Catholics came in the end to regard the Union as the cause of their exclusion. Instead of coalescing with the rest of the nation, they began to look upon themselves as

the nation. Unfortunately the evil did not stop here. One of the worst effects of this delay in granting Catholic Emancipation was that it weakened, and ultimately destroyed, the influence of the natural leaders of the Irish people. But the history of this schism, though noticeable during the last few years of Grattan's career, belongs more properly to the life of Daniel O'Connell.

CHAPTER IX.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION AGITATION.

1801-1820.

Grattan retires to Tinnehinch—Pitt's re-accession to office—Grattan returned for the borough of Malton—His successful *début*—Death of Pitt—"All the Talents" Administration—State of the Catholic question—Death of Fox—"No Popery" Administration—Disturbances in Ireland—Stringent coercive measures supported by Grattan — Revival of the Catholic agitation — Origin of the "Securities" controversy—Movement for the repeal of the Union —Supported by Grattan—Prince of Wales appointed Regent—Deserts his friends—Rising influence of O'Connell—"Securities" controversy revived — Catholic petition transferred to Sir H. Parnell — Depression of the Catholics — Grattan abandons the "Securities"—Attacked by the mob—His last speech—Illness—Death—Concluding remarks.

AFTER the consummation of the Union, Grattan, declining a pressing offer on the part of Earl Fitzwilliam of a seat in the Imperial Parliament, retired to Tinnehinch. The recent struggle, with all its excitement, had told severely on a constitution never very robust, and previously much undermined by assiduous attention to parliamentary duties. Disgusted with the Union, he was anxious for a season to abjure politics, and to seek refuge from the world in the seclusion of country life. Fortunately his manner of living was very temperate, and with change of air and regular exercise, not forgetting his matutinal dip in the river regardless both of the weather and the season, he

soon recovered his usual health and buoyancy of spirits. It is pleasant to picture him, after the storm and passion of parliamentary warfare, sauntering along the river side, covered in spring with wild violets and primroses, meditating on the future of his country, or reclining on the green sward beneath the blossoming hawthorn, revelling, as he was wont, in the song of the birds, or haply conning some of his favourite poets. . . .

Into this calm and tranquil life the abortive insurrection of Robert Emmet, coming like the last reverberation of the Rebellion of 1798, fell like a bomb disturbing his repose, and filling him with grave apprehensions as to the consequences it might have for Ireland. Its suppression, however, without needless severity, gave him great satisfaction; but it, at the same time, impressed him with the necessity of instituting some effective control over the executive. Recalling to mind the horrors of '98, he trembled when he thought that Emmet's rebellion might have again plunged the country into a civil war. "Legislative provisions alone," he wrote to Fox, "won't do. The general spirit of the executive must be looked to. It was against the hostility of that general spirit that the people, notwithstanding their legal acquisitions, revolted; a revolt very criminal, very senseless, but deriving its cause from Government, which was guilty not only of its own crimes, but the crimes of the people." But of any such reform there was little likelihood.

The resignation of Pitt in 1801 had, as we have already noticed, been followed by the accession to power of Addington, a man of mean abilities and limited views, with no other claim to office than subserviency to the King. The peace of Amiens gave a temporary popularity to his Administration, but in 1804 it succumbed before the combined attacks of the Old and New Oppo-

sition, and on May 10th, Pitt again succeeded to office, this time under a written stipulation not to bring forward the Catholic question. His resignation in 1801 had been governed solely by the King's opposition to the measure, and a sense of what was due to himself and Lord Cornwallis. But having made this sacrifice to the demands of private honour and public opinion, he did not feel himself obliged to make the concession of the Catholic demands a *sine quâ non* to his reacceptance of office, particularly as he had entirely convinced himself of the King's determination to persist in his opposition to it. In coming to this conclusion, Pitt was probably more influenced by personal regard for the King than by motives of individual ambition; but whether such a reason could justify, though it might palliate, so grave a dereliction of public duty and sacrifice of principle, may well be questioned. The Addington Administration having fallen before the attack of the Fox and Grenville combination supported by Pitt, it was intended, in forming the new Ministry, that it should embrace the leaders of the different political parties. But to this arrangement the King refused to agree, except on the condition of Fox's exclusion from the Cabinet. To this stipulation Fox generously assented, but his party refused to acquiesce in his proscription, and they were supported by the Grenville section, who were disgusted at Pitt's lukewarmness in pressing his rival's claims. The result was that, with the substitution of Pitt for Addington, the Ministry remained practically unaltered, and even the latter, before the year expired, was again admitted to a seat in the Cabinet.

Shortly after the completion of these arrangements Grattan, accepting the friendly offer of Earl Fitzwilliam, and at the earnest request of Fox, was in April, 1805, elected member for the borough of Malton, in Yorkshire.

Already in the previous year the leading Catholics of Ireland, finding that nothing was to be expected from the spontaneous generosity of the Ministry, had resolved to petition Parliament for their relief. In the spring of 1805, overtures were made by them to Pitt, but finding him inaccessible, they submitted their petition to Fox and Lord Grenville, who consented to advocate it, believing that their support would have a beneficial and tranquillising effect on the minds of the Irish Catholics, when they saw how large a proportion of the talents, property, and influence of the Imperial Parliament was on their side. Accordingly, on May 13th, 1805, Lord Grenville in the House of Lords, and Fox in the House of Commons, moved for a committee to consider the petition. Notwithstanding a long and violent invective on the part of Dr. Duigenan, who rose, immediately after Fox had sat down, to oppose the motion *in limine*, the debate passed off very well. Fox was eloquent, philosophic, and benevolent: Pitt, as might have been expected, was extremely temperate in his reply. But the chief speaker of the evening was Grattan, who appeared in the House for the first time. His speech, which was an excellent rejoinder to Duigenan, gave great satisfaction to his friends, who had been somewhat anxious as to his reception, and completely won over to his side those who at first had been inclined to regard him with dislike or contempt.

"He rose," says Lord Holland, who was present on the occasion, "in a House prepared to laugh at him in the face of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, both of whom had treated him with scorn, and with a manner and voice much exposed to ridicule elsewhere, but more especially in an Assembly which had never been familiarized to it, had no experience of the sense and genius by which these defects were redeemed, and has at all times been remarkable for great reluctance in confirming reputations for oratory elsewhere obtained. When he

rose curiosity was excited, and one might have heard a pin drop in that crowded House. It required, indeed, intense attention to catch the strange and long deep-fetched whisper in which he began; and I could see the incipient smile curling on Mr. Pitt's lips at the brevity and antithesis of his sentences, his grotesque gesticulations, peculiar and almost foreign accent, and arch articulation and countenance. As he proceeded, however, the sneers of his opponents were softened into courtesy and attention, and at length settled in delight and admiration. Mr. Pitt beat time to the artificial but harmonious cadence of his periods, and Mr. Canning's countenance kindled at the brightness of a fancy which in glitter fully equalled, in real warmth and power far exceeded his own. Never was triumph more complete."

Such, indeed, appears to have been the general impression. Reading the speech now, it appears to lack much of the fire and brilliancy which animates many of his former efforts, but it is a vigorous and well-sustained piece of reasoning, showing no signs either of intellectual debility, or physical weakness, and containing several passages of remarkable beauty and pathos, notably that in which he so touchingly alludes to his own connection with the Irish Parliament—"of that assembly I have a parental recollection. I sat by her cradle; I followed her hearse." Though rejected by an overwhelming majority, the result of the debate was on the whole encouraging, and seemed to promise a speedy recognition of the Catholic claims.

The death of Pitt in January of the following year, and the accession of Fox and Grenville to power, filled the Catholics with the most sanguine expectations. The King's opposition, however, presented an insuperable barrier. For though no definite promise was this time exacted by him, it was tacitly agreed out of regard for his feeble health that the Catholic question should be allowed to remain in abeyance. This decision was of course very mortifying to the Catholics, and Fox deemed it necessary, in order to demonstrate the good

intentions of Government towards them, to make a distinct promise to do what he could for them in reforming the administration of justice. Unfortunately, before he was able to give practical effect to his promises, he died on September 13, 1806, within a few months after taking office. Acting, however, on the assurance he had given them, and conciliated by the appointment of the Duke of Bedford as Lord Lieutenant, the leading Catholics determined for the nonce not to press their claims.

Though greatly weakened by the death of Fox, the Whigs still continued to hold the balance of power in the Coalition Cabinet, and it was resolved to introduce into the Annual Mutiny Bill a clause enabling Roman Catholics to hold commissions in the army. Though a boon of trifling significance, the King refused to give it his consent, and when Grenville and his colleagues acquiesced in his refusal, he proceeded to demand from them a written declaration that they would not propose any further concessions to the Catholics. This, however, they declined to do, and tendered their resignation, which was immediately accepted by the King, who forthwith proceeded to construct a new Administration pledged to resist Catholic Emancipation, at the head of which he placed the Duke of Portland; the Duke of Richmond succeeding the Duke of Bedford as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Meanwhile, the situation of Ireland was beginning to attract serious attention. During 1806, the western counties, particularly Sligo, Mayo, Longford, and Roscommon, had been much disturbed by the "Threshers," individuals who rode up and down the country in bodies of fifteen to thirty strong, well mounted and well armed, pretending to redress the grievances of the peasantry, chiefly in the matter of tithes. As usual, the magistrates proved themselves utterly incapable, and clamoured loudly

for military assistance and extra-legal measures. To these demands the Duke of Bedford had refused to listen, and by a vigorous application of the law as it stood had succeeded before he quitted the Government in restoring law and order in the disturbed counties.

Less wise than the Duke, Chancellor Ponsonby thought the situation called for more stringent measures, and a strong Coercion Bill was already under the consideration of the Cabinet when the Grenville Ministry collapsed. The measure was, however, immediately adopted by their successors, and on July 9th, 1807, the Chief Secretary, Sir Arthur Wellesley, brought in a Bill for the suppression of insurrection in Ireland. In justification of the measure he declared that it closely resembled the Act passed by the Irish Parliament in 1796. Much interest attached to the course pursued by Grattan on this occasion. He agreed, he said, with those who urged that Ireland should be won by conciliation, and therefore he had voted for every mild measure. He agreed, also, that the country was quiet; the French party had most certainly not been implicated in the late disturbances; but the times were dangerous, and there was no saying what an hour might bring forth. In case of emergency, therefore, he deemed it advisable that the Bill should pass; in itself it would probably render the proclaiming any district unnecessary. His arguments, or rather his assertions, had great weight with those who looked to him for light and leading on subjects connected with Ireland; and Sir Samuel Romilly tells us that many who had come down to the House intending to vote against the Bill went away without dividing; only ten members had the courage to vote against the measure. To his friends, Grattan's conduct was utterly inexplicable. In Ireland he was much censured for his apostacy, for so it was regarded, and

subjected to considerable anonymous and shameful abuse. But, while thinking his conduct a mistake, I must confess that it appears to me perfectly intelligible and consistent. His objection to the Insurrection Bill of 1796 was, it will be remembered, wholly grounded on the fact that it was directed against the Catholics, and did not include the Orangemen, who, in his opinion, had been guilty of far worse excesses than the Defenders. As for the principle of the Bill, he entirely agreed that disorder should be suppressed with a high hand. Violence of any kind, whether emanating from the people or from the Government, he regarded as an offence against the Constitution, and as such to be reprobated by all good citizens. In the present case the existence of a French party in Ireland, of which he seems to have been thoroughly convinced, seemed to him conclusive in favour of strong measures.

Meanwhile, there had been growing up on the part of the younger generation of Irish Catholics a feeling of dissatisfaction at the "wait-a-while," or "dignified silence" policy of Lord Fingal and Keogh, the more so as the dissolution of the Whig Ministry seemed to preclude all hope of any spontaneous action on the part of Government. Accordingly, on January 19th, 1808, a meeting was held in Dublin for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning for a removal of the liabilities under which the Irish Catholics had so long and patiently laboured. An adverse amendment was proposed; but the eloquence of O'Connell, then rising into repute as the leader of the more energetic party, carried the day, and it was decided unanimously to petition Parliament in the next session. The petition was entrusted to Lord Grenville and Grattan; and on May 25th, the latter moved to refer it to a committee of the whole House. His speech in support of it was exceedingly able and

temperate, and was much admired, more he thought than it deserved, for in his opinion "one half had the langour of old age, and wanted fire and rapidity." But the chief attraction about it was an offer made by him, on the authority of Dr. Milner, Vicar-Apostolic of the Midland District, on behalf of the Catholic bishops in Ireland, that in future the king should have a negative upon the three names usually transmitted to the Pope for his approbation upon every vacancy of a Catholic Bishopric in Ireland. This offer, explicitly confirmed by Ponsonby and repeated in the House of Lords by Earl Grenville, made a visible impression on Parliament. "Our Catholic question," Grattan wrote on May 27th, "went off favourably, I think, for the Catholics. There was no violent sentiment against them, and a very strong sentiment for them."

In Ireland the result of the debate was at first hailed with general satisfaction, and it was not till the end of July that any distinct antipathy to the Veto manifested itself. The feeling of dislike to it, however, grew rapidly; and on September 14th, it was resolved at a convention of Irish prelates that any alteration in the nomination of Irish bishops was inexpedient. Their conduct was generally approved, and an address of thanks signed by 40,000 laymen. In coming to this decision the Irish prelates appear to have acted quite honestly, and from what they imagined to be a well-founded apprehension that the concession in question might eventually prove dangerous to the Roman Catholic religion; but in doing so they undoubtedly retracted from their former views on the subject, and placed their advocates in Parliament in an extremely awkward position.

The effect of this change of front was at once apparent when Grattan presented the Catholic petition on

February 28th, 1810. Alluding to the Veto, he said, he regretted to inform the House that the sentiments of the Catholics were not favourable to it as he had supposed, and given the House to understand. Whether he had misinformed the House at the time, or whether the Catholics had been guilty of retractation was a question which he should never agitate, it always having been his fixed principle never to defend himself at the expense of his country. He promised to renew the question at some future date; but for the present he deprecated further conversation on it.

Coincident in point of time with this new phase of the Catholic question was the origin of another and far more important movement, destined to absorb into itself all minor questions. I refer, of course, to the movement for the repeal of the Union. Already, in 1808, there had been symptoms of a growing discontent on the part of the merchants of Dublin with the Union; but it was not till 1810, when the general distress of the country, and her difficulty in keeping pace with the rapidly increasing exigencies of the Empire, gave to these isolated symptoms of discontent an extended and, indeed, national significance, that any definite action was taken in the matter. On September 18th of that year, however, a large meeting of freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin was held in the Royal Exchange, when the chair was taken by Sir James Riddall, High Sheriff of the city, and resolutions in favour of a repeal of the Union passed. An Address to Grattan, thanking him for his patriotic conduct in the past, and calling upon him to use his endeavours to procure a repeal of the Union, passed at the same meeting, received from him a cordial response, merely stipulating that he should be allowed to use his own discretion in the matter.

Such, then, was the general situation of affairs when the relapse of George III. and the accession of the Prince of Wales as Regent inspired the Catholics with the liveliest hopes of a speedy realization of their wishes. Hitherto the political connections of the Prince had been entirely with the Whig party, and it was naturally expected that he would choose as his Ministers those with whom he had associated through life. But the Prince in power was a very different person from the Prince in opposition. Forgetting all his obligations, and priding himself on having neither predilections nor animosities to gratify, he no sooner found himself relieved from the restrictions imposed upon him by Parliament than he renounced his former allies, and threw himself into the arms of his father's Ministers.

In Ireland public indignation ran very high against the Prince for his unblushing tergiversation and at an aggregate meeting of Catholics on June 18th, 1812, a resolution was passed deploring his conduct as a breach of public faith, and ascribing it to "the fatal witchery of an unworthy secret influence." The resolution is significant of a great change that had come over the general body of Catholics. Gradually, under the influence of O'Connell, the Catholics throughout the country were beginning to take an interest in their own affairs, and losing their old timidity, were beginning to realize that they were a great political power in the country. During 1809 and 1810, O'Connell had been struggling hard to give consistency and organisation to the Catholic movement. To this the Convention Act of 1793, prohibiting the meeting of any body with delegated powers offered a serious obstacle; but there was a widespread opinion, not confined to the Catholics, that the Act was an abuse of power, and that it would be well to test the validity of

it. Accordingly, early in 1811, acting on O'Connell's advice, a circular letter signed by the Secretary of the Dublin Association, was addressed to the Catholics throughout the country, calling upon them to appoint a number of individuals to assist in preparing a petition to Parliament. The Government, as was perhaps expected, immediately interfered, and on February 12th, Wellesley Pole, the Chief Secretary, issued a letter to all magistrates, ordering them to arrest any person taking part in such proceedings.

Undismayed, however, by this defeat, it was resolved at an aggregate meeting of Catholics in Fishamble Street Theatre, on July 9th, presided over by Lord Fingal, to renew the attempt, and accordingly in October there assembled in Dublin, under the name of a Catholic Committee, and for the avowed purpose of preparing a petition to Parliament, a body of more than 400 men, representing the clergy, the nobility, and the commonalty of Ireland. The assembly was immediately proclaimed, and on November 23rd, forcibly suppressed. Its suppression created great excitement throughout the country, and immediately Parliament assembled, the subject was brought before it by Earl Fitzwilliam in the House of Lords, and Lord Morpeth in the House of Commons, who moved for a Committee to consider the state of Ireland. In justifying the conduct of Government the Chief Secretary commented severely on the intimate connection between Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Union, and read to the House the Resolutions passed at the aggregate meeting of freemen and freeholders of Dublin on September 18th. But the debate was chiefly remarkable for an eloquent speech by Canning, on behalf of concession to the Roman Catholics. The time had come, he said, when it was safe as well as just to

concede the Catholic demands; at the same time, however, he warned the Catholics not to allow themselves to be misled by the cry for a repeal of the Union, which would inevitably frustrate their hopes. "Repeal the Union!" he cried in scorn, "restore the Heptarchy as soon." The motion was warmly supported by Grattan, but it was defeated by 229 to 135. In the House of Lords a similar motion was rejected by 162 to 76.

A few weeks after this debate the Duke of Devonshire paid a visit to his estates in Ireland. At a banquet in his honour, in the Black Abbey in Kilkenny, at which were present Lord Bessborough, Ponsonby, Grattan, and a number of other influential men, it was resolved to start a Protestant petition on behalf of the Catholics. This petition, which was numerously signed, was presented by Grattan on April 23rd, when he moved for a Committee to revise the laws affecting the Roman Catholics. Catholic Emancipation, he reminded the House, was the price of the Union, and unless it was paid it would be certain to lead to repeal. In the end it was bound to triumph. "A majority cannot overlay a great principle. God will guard His own cause against rank majorities. In vain shall men appeal to a church cry, or to a mock thunder: the proprietor of the bolt is on the side of the people." Gentlemen called for securities; he thought they ought rather to offer some adequate reason for their opposition —some apology to after ages for inflicting on one fourth of their fellow subjects political damnation to all eternity. He was admirably supported by Canning; but his motion was rejected by 300 to 215.

Towards the close of the session Canning proposed that the House of Commons should, early in the next session, take into consideration the laws affecting the Catholics. His proposal, supported by Lord Castlereagh on behalf of

Government, was carried by a majority of 235 to 106. This was a great victory, and seemed to promise a successful termination of the long struggle. In 1813, a new Parliament assembled, and on February 25th Grattan moved that the House should resolve itself into Committee to take into its most serious consideration the state of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as should be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom. After a prolonged debate this motion was carried on March 2nd, by a majority of 40. A week afterwards Grattan moved and carried a resolution to the effect that it was highly advisable to provide for the removal of the civil and military disqualifications under which the Roman Catholics laboured, with such exceptions and under such regulations as might be deemed necessary for the preservation of the Protestant succession and the rights of the Church as by law established. Leave was at the same time granted to bring in a Bill based on this resolution. On April 30th the Bill was presented, read for the first time, and ordered to be printed. In its scope it went to establish a perfect equality between Protestants and Catholics, so far as sitting in Parliament, voting at elections, the enjoyment of corporate rights, and ability to hold civil and military posts were concerned. But it at the same time imposed an oath on the Catholics, and excluded them from the situations of Lord Chancellor in England and Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, and from all interference in or management of matters appertaining to the Establishment. These securities Grattan regarded as not of very much importance in themselves, but necessary to obtain the co-operation of the more moderate Protestants. Canning, however, was anxious to establish some legisla-

tive control over the Roman Catholic clergy, and proposed certain clauses to that effect, which were accepted by Grattan, and incorporated in the Bill. On May 13th the Bill, thus amended, came up for a second reading, when further modifications were suggested by Lord Castlereagh, in order to secure the co-operation of the Pope in any arrangement that might be arrived at in regard to elections to vacant sees. He did not, however, oppose the measure, and the Bill having been read a second time, was committed *pro formâ*. Subsequently Castlereagh, Canning, and Ponsonby met together, in order to discuss the new suggestions, and to come to some agreement as to the clauses which it was deemed necessary to add to the Bill in order to give security to Catholic Emancipation. The result was that, on May 19th, Canning presented a fresh set of provisions, which he thought would combine and meet the views of all those who assented to the principle of the measure. These provisions were accordingly declared to have been read a second time, and the further consideration of the Bill postponed for a few days, in order to give the House time to digest them. On May 24th, when the measure came up for consideration before Committee, Speaker Abbot met the proposal to allow the Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament by a direct negative. After an animated debate, the proposal was rejected by a majority of four, whereupon the Bill was withdrawn.

Meanwhile, in Ireland the measure had undergone considerable adverse criticism. Even in its original form it had been far from affording general satisfaction. It was, O'Connell declared, a well-intentioned Bill, but slovenly in its recitals and inaccurate in its details. But it was not till the exact nature of the securities was known that the opposition to it assumed anything like formidable

dimensions. Without knowing that it had been withdrawn, the Catholic prelates unanimously resolved that the ecclesiastical clauses were utterly incompatible with the discipline of the Church and the free exercise of their religion. After a fierce controversy their conduct was approved by the Catholic Board, and a vote of thanks returned to them.

The Irish Catholics were then, and have since been much censured for what was called their extravagant and inconsistent behaviour on this occasion; but their conduct was not without its justification. To have surrendered their control over the election of their own clergy would have been to open the door to all those Court influences which Burke had warned them against, and which would eventually have led to a schism between the higher clergy on the one hand and the priests and the people on the other. The principle of *divide et impera* was, so far as Ireland was concerned, a time-honoured maxim of Castle Government, and there can be little doubt that the concession of the Veto, innocent as it appeared on the face of it, would sooner or later have been used as an instrument to "manage" the Irish clergy.

To Grattan the result, though half expected, was very disappointing. He had consented to the Securities, not from any belief in their efficacy, but because they seemed to him a perfectly harmless means of conciliating Protestant opinion. But in Ireland his conduct was much censured by the Anti-vetoists. No one, said O'Connell, giving expression to the popular feeling, could for a moment doubt Grattan's integrity and patriotism; but he was mistaken on the subject of the Securities. The mistake was a natural one, but he had himself to blame for it. He had declined to consult the Catholic Board on the question, and O'Connell plainly hinted, at a

general meeting of the Catholics on June 15th, 1813, that much as he admired Grattan it might, nevertheless, be his painful duty to advocate placing the Catholic petition in the hands of some other person who would consent to advocate it in the manner they desired. In November, the Board opened a correspondence with him, but without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. To an invitation to receive a communication from the Board as to the future management of the Catholic petition, Grattan replied that, if the communication was not in the nature of instructions, he would gladly receive it, but he declined to be dictated to on the subject. His reply was considered very unsatisfactory; but at the time nothing further was said, and on May 27th, 1814, Grattan again presented the Catholic petition to Parliament, when he announced his intention of not speaking further on the question that session. Substantial difficulties, he said, had been removed, but circumstances rendered it inopportune to press the Catholic claims at that time. His conduct irritated O'Connell and the Anti-vetoists, who strongly remonstrated with him. But to their representations he paid no attention, and flatly declined to argue the matter further with them. Thereupon the Catholic Board was summoned to consider what ought to be done under the circumstances; but before it could meet Government intervened and suppressed it.

The suppression of the Board proved a terrible blow to the Catholic cause, and after the secession of the aristocratic party it required all O'Connell's courage and exertion to preserve even a semblance of a party opposed to the Veto. Nevertheless, a petition was prepared and entrusted to Sir Henry Parnell, who presented it to Parliament on May 30th, 1815, and moved for a Committee to inquire into the laws affecting the Roman

Catholics. To the admiration of the House of Commons, Grattan rose to support the motion. The opportunity seemed to him a favourable one for explaining his conduct. He condemned, he said, the way in which the Catholics pressed their claims. The demand for unqualified concession was certain to damage their cause and insure its rejection. For his own part he had always refused to flatter them with false hopes, and he again candidly told them that unless they came to Parliament in a spirit of conciliation they would get nothing. He would even venture to say that conciliation was not only essential to their interest, but essential also to their duty. He could well understand that the warmth of certain young minds might have betrayed them into error, but he warned them strongly against precipitate measures. The motion was however, rejected by 228 to 147.

The year closed gloomily enough for the Catholics. Triumphant on the Continent, the Ministry of Lord Liverpool no longer regarded the question of Catholic Emancipation as one of importance. And in truth the Catholics, split up into Vetoists and Anti-vetoists, were far from formidable. The Vetoists, weak in numbers but highly respectable, contented themselves with holding semi-private meetings at the residence of Lord Trimblestone. The position of the Anti-vetoists was even more deplorable. The "National Leaders," as they called themselves, were timid, and deserted their posts. Parliament was indifferent. The Association, after dwindling to a mere handful, got itself into debt, and had to be extricated by O'Connell. Of O'Connell himself it is impossible to speak too highly. Though deserted by his friends, denounced in Parliament, and thwarted by his enemies, he still clung bravely to his post. On May 21st, in the following year, Grattan presented a petition to

Parliament, signed by nine hundred Vetoists, and moved for a Committee to consider the state of the penal laws. He was supported by Sir Henry Parnell and Lord Castlereagh; but the motion was defeated by 172 to 141.

A few weeks afterwards, Sir Henry Parnell moved a series of resolutions in favour of unrestricted emancipation. His conduct elicited a strong remonstrance from Lord Castlereagh, who said that, although he was not prepared to oppose the concessions proposed, yet he could not suffer himself to be dragged in to support every indiscreet motion which might be brought forward on the subject. After some hesitation, Sir Henry consented to withdraw his resolutions, at the same time, however, remarking that he saw no other way of succeeding than by bringing the question repeatedly before Parliament. The result showed that nothing would be done by Parliament so long as the Catholics were not unanimous on the subject. In the beginning of 1817, overtures were accordingly made for a reconciliation, but without resulting in any practical good. Neither party would give way. But this time the representations of the Catholics did not pass unheeded by Grattan. For on May 9th, 1817, having caused a petition presented by Sir Henry Parnell, in the previous session, to be read, he moved for a Committee to consider the state of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics. He spoke very briefly, but what he said clearly showed that he was more and more closely approximating to O'Connell and the Anti-vetoists. His conduct did not escape observation, and was strongly commented upon. In the last year, said an honourable member opposed to the Catholic claims, the Catholics of Ireland were divided into two parties: the one principally consisting of their lay aristocracy, and those under their immediate influence, presented a list of a few hundred names; the other included their clergy and

embraced the great mass of the Roman Catholic population. The first class, in return for emancipation were ready to acquiesce in any arrangements or regulations not inconsistent with their religion. The second, and more numerous, would hear nothing of these regulations. "To-day," proceeded the hon. member, "we hear nothing of the smaller party. They observe a prudent, and perhaps a necessary silence; but we are distinctly told that the great body of the Catholics, rather than agree to the detested measure of the Veto under any form, prefer to continue without emancipation." The promoters of the measure now came forward with a new offer, and proposed the domestic nomination of their bishops as an all-sufficient security to satisfy every Protestant apprehension. The Catholics, it was said, were ready to appoint their own bishops, and the Pope was ready to give up his claim to their nomination. In his opinion such security was inadequate, and after a prolonged debate the House divided, 221 for the motion, against it, 245.

Though defeated, the result of the debate, and more particularly Grattan's conversion, was so distinctly favourable to the Catholics that it was determined to allow the question to remain in abeyance during the following session, the more so as in the natural course of events Parliament would be dissolved in 1818. At the general election, Grattan was again returned for Dublin, which city he had represented in the Imperial Parliament since 1811. But his election nearly proved fatal to him. For as he was returning from the hustings, he was violently assailed by the mob, who demolished his chair and severely jostled him, one miscreant inflicting a serious wound on his head with a wooden missile. Hurling it back with all his force, but weak from the loss of blood,

he fell into the arms of his friends, who bore him off to a place of shelter. "Like Actæon," he said, "I am devoured by my own hounds." It was an abominable outrage, of which everybody was heartily ashamed; but it left no trace of ill-will on his mind. "It was religion—it was religion," he earnestly explained to those who would have blamed his countrymen, "and religion broke my head."

With the exception of an occasional speech on the war with France, and one on the Corn Laws in 1815, Grattan confined himself wholly to advocating the cause of the Roman Catholics. After the session was over he returned to Tinnehinch. Of his life there, in the decline of his days, there is a pleasing sketch in the Auckland papers. It is a letter from George Eden to his mother Lady Auckland, and is dated Tinnehinch, September 11th, 1813:—

"I write," the letter begins, "from this place (though without much to say), because I have about half-an-hour to spare whilst the ladies are getting ready for church. I am in, I should think, the most beautiful country in the world, and with one of the pleasantest families I ever saw. Grattan is himself quite delightful—playful, talkative, full of anecdote, and candid and charitable to all mankind; and, in consequence, he is beloved by everybody whether friend or stranger—whether agreeing or disagreeing with him in politics. His conversation is particularly entertaining, though perhaps a little too epigrammatical for good taste; but his pointed metaphors flow so easily from him that they do not offend. His life is most completely domestic; his walks much confined to his flower gardens and shrubberies. He has a little *levee* of beggars at the door every morning, and he comes in now and then and says, 'There is a boy who looks hungry,' and he goes off with a plate of toast and an egg. This perhaps multiplies his petitioners a little; and, in the same good-natured way, he lets everything, animals and trees, &c., overgrow the place; but as its character is wildness, this does not injure it."

On May 3rd, 1819, Grattan presented eight Roman Catholic and five Protestant petitions in favour of the

Catholic claims, and moved for a Committee to inquire into the laws affecting the Roman Catholics. The opening of his speech was very impressive, doubly impressive to us, from the fact that it was the last public speech he ever delivered.

"I beg leave, Sir," he said, "in presenting these petitions, to express my most ardent hope that they will ultimately succeed, and that in their success they may give strength to the Protestant Church, to the Act of Settlement, and to the Protestant succession to the Crown, and that they may form an identification of people, so as to preserve tranquillity at home and security and respectability abroad, while the two religions under the roof of one and the same empire may exercise their respective privileges, with the same God, the same Gospel, the same Redeemer, with different sacraments, but the same results and in their different notes, and with all the variety of nature, but with its concord and harmony also, offer up their prayers to their Common Creator."

It is easy to see from his whole speech how much the situation of Ireland was weighing on his mind. A short time before he had expressed to his old friends, Mr. Burrowes and Mr. Berwick, his apprehension that the postponement of Catholic Emancipation would create such a distrust of England in the minds of Irishmen as would eventually lead to a dissolution of the Union. "The people," he said, "take no interest in the Imperial Parliament; it is too far, and its remedies too late." The result of the division was, however, encouraging. The motion for a Committee was lost only by two votes, and Grattan looked forward with sanguine expectation to the next session. But it was otherwise decreed. In the autumn he caught a severe cold, and was unable to attend Parliament, which had assembled in consequence of the generally disturbed state of the north of England. In December, his illness increased, and it was with great difficulty that he managed to get through the winter. When spring came he recovered a little, and was wheeled

out in his chair to a sheltered terrace, bordered with sweet-briar. His mind reverted to the scenes of his early manhood, and he recalled with pleasure the independent part he had played through life. "It is a great consolation," he said, "it is a second immortality." His quarrel with Flood greatly oppressed him, and he was anxious that his speech on that memorable occasion should be suppressed. As his illness increased, he grew more and more desirous to go to England. "I wish," he exclaimed, "to take my seat and speak on two subjects—Reform and the Catholics." "If God grants me only one month more, I am sure I shall be very thankful." His physicians tried to dissuade him, but in vain, and every preparation was made to carry him to London. On May 12th, he rallied a little and went to Dublin, where he received a deputation from the Catholics, including O'Connell. When the deputation entered the room he rose to receive them, but fell back into his chair exhausted. His first words were: "My friends, I am going to die—we are about to part for ever." There was not a dry eye in the room. On May 20th, he left Dublin. The people assembled round his carriage, and the quay was lined with crowds cheering him when he got on board. Next day, after a very painful voyage, he arrived at Liverpool, where he was greeted with another great ovation, and presented with an address on behalf of the Catholics. Unable to bear the motion of a carriage, an open boat was hired for him, and he proceeded by the canal to London. At Rugby, mortification set in, and, after suffering great anguish, he arrived in London on May 31st. On June 3rd, though visibly declining, he expressed his determination to appear in the House, and the Speaker offered him every facility. When his friends told him the exertion would cost him

his life, he replied, "'Tis a good death—a good death." Next day, however, he was unable to move. Calling his friends round him, he bade them all farewell, and, with a prayer for his country on his lips, he passed quietly away. It was a fitting close to a long and well-spent life. His wish was to be buried at Moyanna, on the estate given him by his countrymen; but his family, acceding to the wish of the nation, consented that he should be honoured with a public funeral and a grave in Westminster Abbey. His body was placed beside that of Fox, but no epitaph or memorial slab marks the place where he lies. In moving a new writ for the City of Dublin, Sir James Mackintosh alluded in touching terms to his death, and describing his character, gracefully applied to him the words of the ancient historian: "*Vitâ innocentissimus; ingenio florentissimus; proposito sanctissimus.*"

In personal appearance there was nothing strikingly imposing about Grattan. He was a small spare man, and very ungraceful in his gait, owing, it is said, to a habit he had acquired of walking on his toes, which gave a "springy" appearance, and gained for him at college the nickname of "the elastic body." His face was long and thin, and slightly marked by the small-pox, but it was genial, and when he smiled peculiarly attractive. His action when addressing the House, especially if much interested in his subject, was extremely violent and eccentric, and at first hearing more calculated to provoke laughter than add dignity to his words. With arms waving wildly about him, and his body swaying backwards and forwards, he was not inaptly compared to a vessel rolling in the trough of the sea. In private life the same thing was visible. He never said or did anything in the ordinary way, and yet, after the first feeling of strangeness

wore off, it all seemed perfectly natnral and harmonious. "I was much struck," said Lord Byron, "with the simplicity of Grattan's manners in private life: they were odd, but they were natural." As a youth he loved to be alone with Nature; but as old age stole on he began to take more and more pleasure in society. The change was a very common one. The buoyant hopes of youth and all its expectations of success had given place to disappointment and a saddening sense of failure. He longed to escape from his own thoughts and the remembrance of what once had been and to lose himself in the world. "Hope," he said, "is the food of solitude. An old man cannot enjoy solitude. He has learnt the secret. He has found out the rogueries of Fortune." Nevertheless, the country always retained its charm for him. Even when in London, attending to his Parliamentary duties, he loved to snatch a holiday for an excursion up the river Thames to Richmond or Windsor. And seldom on these occasions did he lack a companion. His simplicity of heart, the almost boyish enthusiasm which he took in things generally, his courtesy to high and low alike, his vast fund of information, his genial tolerance of human foibles, his humour, his fun, his inexhaustible store of anecdote, and his perfect accessibility, indeed, rendered him one of the most delightful of companions. But it was only in congenial society that he thus revealed himself. He never shone in public. In large and mixed assemblies he was shy, reticent, and miserable. Nowhere was he happier than in the circle of his own family. His habits were wholly domestic. Twice only did he pass beyond the shores of England; once to Spa and another time to Paris, where, as he laughingly remarked, the only acquaintances he made were an Abbé and a swindler. His love of Greek and Latin literature led him to desire to see

Athens and Rome, but beyond that he had no wish to travel. Personally brave, he attached great importance to a readiness "to go out," when the occasion demanded. "To be a good shot," he said, "is useful. It makes a brave man braver and a timid man half-brave. But it makes a bad man worse than it found him—a bully." In the eyes of those who confounded church ritual and church dogmas with religion, he seemed little better than an atheist; but if "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" is of the essence of religion, then surely he was a man of deep religious feeling. Indeed, with all his faults and failings, and they were neither few nor small, he was a man of whom Irishmen may justly feel proud, and whose life, in all its noble earnestness of purpose and single-hearted zeal for his country, is at once a lesson and an inspiration for the future.

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